

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TWO TIBETAN PRĀSANGIKA
MĀDHYAMIKA ACCOUNTS OF THE TWO TRUTHS**

Sonam Thakchoe, Ācārya (CIHTS), Śāstri (CIHTS)

**This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
of University of Tasmania, November 2002.**

To my mother



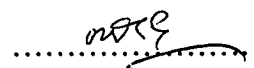
DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main contents work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.



Sonam Thakchoe

This thesis may be made available for loan and limited copying in accordance with the Copyright Act, 1968.



Sonam Thakchoe

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to my teachers at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS). During the nine years of my intensive studies on Indian and Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy, I received countless hours of teaching from dozens of teachers. I benefited so much from listening to the abbots of the four schools who were passionate about teaching the distinctive characters of the traditional schools of thought that they represent. I owe special debts to those teachers who taught me Madhyamaka philosophy. They include The Ven. Prof. dGeshe Yeshe Thabs mkhas, Prof. Sems pa rDo rje, The Ven. dGeshe 'Jig med zLa ba (the Abbot of dGe lugs pa Students' Welfare Committee), The Ven. dGeshe Blo bzang rGya tsho (the current Abbot of the bLo gsal gLing Monastic University), The Ven. Shes rab rGya tsho (the Abbot of the Sakya Students' Welfare Committee), and The Ven. rDo rje Tshering (the Abbot of the rNying ma Students' Welfare Committee).

As far as people who were directly involved in making this project a success, my greatest debts are to my two most distinguished supervisors. I received enormous support and encouragement from Prof. Jay. L. Garfield and Prof. Jeffrey Malpas who literally made my project a success. I am especially grateful to Prof. Garfield for introducing me to Western

Philosophy, spending countless hours reading my drafts, providing detailed and invaluable criticisms, comments, and also providing immeasurable guidance on philosophical, stylistic, syntactic and grammatical matters. I am deeply grateful to Prof. Malpas for supervising me. Immensely valuable are his comments and guidance on structural, grammatical and a range of other issues. In particular, I profoundly appreciate his time and energy in his careful and thorough editing of my penultimate draft. The fluency and the smooth reading of the thesis are largely due to Jeff's help. My sincere thanks also go to Janet Counsell, the Co-ordinator of ELSIS, English Language Centre. Without her enormous patience and profound goodwill, editing my eccentric Indo-Tibetan English would have been almost impossible. Her contributions to this project have been extremely crucial and I am deeply grateful to her. I am also deeply thankful to Toni Byers, Dr. Angela Rosier, Dr. Pauline Enright and Tessa Saunders for their careful proofreading, and pointing out many typographical and punctuation errors. Thanks to Dr. Angela Rosier, Dr. Cynthia Townley, Dr. Pauline Enright, Dr. Mitch Parsell, Eliza Goddard, Matthew Piscioneri, Elidh St. John, Bruce Wilson, Tessa Saunders, Paul Cutler, Paul McNamara, Graham Wood and other post-graduate students and staff members of the School of Philosophy for their very useful comments and feedback.

I also owe an enormous debt of gratitude to my friends at the Cental Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies. I immensely appreciate the extremely valuable assistance I received from the CIHTS Library Staff, particularly from bSod nams Tshe dbang-la and sPen pa Tshering-la, both making a large corpus of relevant materials available for my project. I am also very thankful to my good old friends, The Ven. Sangs rgyas sGrol ma, bsTan 'dzin bZang mo, Tshe dbang rDo rje and my cousin sKal bzang Nor bu. They have been very helpful particularly in searching relevant literatures from the CIHTS library and shipping (or mailing) them to me in Tasmania. Without their inspiration and support, my research undertakings in Tasmania would have been hampered greatly. I am also grateful for Karma and Roselin Phuntsok for allowing me to use their collections.

In terms of financial contributions I received to undertake this research, I gratefully acknowledge the crucial support from The University of Tasmania, for granting me a University of Tasmania International Scholarship under the Tasmania-Tibet Partnership Program. I am also grateful to Jane Franklin Hall, especially to its principal, Dr David Daintree, for his enormous generosity and hospitality. My thanks also goes to Master Wang Xin-De, the Patriarch Master of the Holy Tantra Jin-Gang-Dhyana Buddhism, for generously supporting me by offering a one-year living allowance.

I am also profoundly thankful to my noble Tasmanian friends, in particular Toni Byers, Jacki Clark, David Chambers and Tania Chambers. I owe them an enormous debt of gratitude. Toni and Jacki very kindly found me the most wonderful place to live in Hobart, lent me furniture (including even the bedsheets). With utmost goodwill and friendship David and Tania not only supported in many other ways, but also extended an open invitation and made me feel part of their family. I thank them from the depths of my heart. I am also deeply thankful to Jennifer Dunbabin, Sandra Kellet, Irene Sawford, Eliza Goddard, Diane Smith, Glen Barwick, David McGregor, Nigel Curtain Smith, and Dr Anna Alomes for their immensely helpful logistical, technical and other support.

ABSTRACT

A comparative analysis of the two Tibetan Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika Accounts of the Two Truths

The primary objective of this dissertation is to demonstrate that the Tibetan Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika offers at least two radically distinct philosophical and hermeneutic approaches concerning the doctrine of the two truths and to explain the nature of the distinction between those accounts. Given the widespread tendency to construe the Tibetan Prāsaṅgika as constituting a single homogeneous system (especially among Theravādin scholars), the dissertation not only has implications for the understanding of the two approaches that are the focus of discussion, but also for the broader understanding of the Tibetan Prāsaṅgika in general.

The two approaches at issue here are associated with the Tibetan Prāsaṅgika thinkers Tsong khapa (A.D. 1357-1423) and Go rampa (A.D. 1429-1489). The dissertation focuses on a comparative analysis of their conception of the two truths—providing an account of their respective definitions of the two truths, their accounts of the relationship between the two truths, the ontological status of the two truths, the epistemic resources for accessing the two truths, the problems concerning the limits of language and thought as

these relate to the notion of ultimate truth, the different modes of realising ultimate truth, and, finally, the nature and possibility of knowledge of the two truths and the implications of such knowledge for the attainment of enlightenment. Through the comparative analysis of Tsong khapa and Go rampa on these issues, the dissertation demonstrates where, why and how the two Tibetan readings of the original Indian sources exhibit distinct and independent characters.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TWO TIBETAN PRĀSANGIKA MĀDHYAMIKA ACCOUNTS OF THE TWO TRUTHS	III
DECLARATION.....	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	III
ABSTRACT	VII
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IX

INTRODUCTION.....	1
The objective and scope of the research	1
Why Tsong khapa and Go rampa?	5
Methodological considerations	7

CHAPTER I.....	10
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO TRUTHS	10
Introduction	10
1. What is divided into the two truths?	14
1.1.The objects of knowledge as the basis of the division	14
1.2. 'Mere mind' (<i>blo tsam</i>) as the basis of the division	20
2. How are the two truths related?.....	29
2.1. The two truths are ontologically identical but conceptually distinct	30
2.2. The two truths are distinct and incompatible.....	36
3. Two truths or one?.....	47
3.1. How is conventional truth 'truth' at all?.....	48
3.2. Why is conventional truth false and deceptive?.....	57
3.3. Applying the worldly convention	61
3.4. The one and only truth	67
Conclusion.....	72

CHAPTER II	74
MEANINGS AND DEFINITIONS OF THE TWO TRUTHS.....	74
Introduction	74
1. The meanings of <i>saṃvṛti</i> (<i>kun rdzob</i>).....	75
1.1. <i>Saṃvṛti</i> as ‘ignorant consciousness’	78
1.2. <i>Saṃvṛti</i> as ‘mutually interdependent’	88
1.3. <i>Saṃvṛti</i> as ‘worldly conventions’	93
2. Concealers: the ‘soteriological objects of negation’	98
3. Meanings of <i>paramārthasatya</i>	108
4. Definitions of the two truths.....	113
4.1. Candrakīrti’s definition of the two truths.....	115
4.2. Nāgārjuna’s definition of the two truths.....	128
Conclusion	137
 CHAPTER III.....	 141
LANGUAGE, CONCEPTUAL MIND & ULTIMATE TRUTH.....	141
Introduction	141
1. The limits of language and the limits of conceptual mind: The cataract analogy and its applications	142
2. Ineffability and inconceivability of ultimate truth.....	158
3. The validity of the conceptual right-view	166
Conclusion	184
 CHAPTER IV	 190
REALISING ULTIMATE TRUTH	190
Introduction	190
1. Seeing ultimate truth by way of not seeing it.....	193
2. Transcendental epistemology	203
2.1. Proliferation of ‘conceptual elaboration’ (<i>prapañca</i>)	204
2.2. Transcending ‘conceptual elaborations’	210
3. Non-dual epistemology	221
3.1. Seeing phenomena as ‘nothing’	235
3.2. Seeing phenomena as ‘empty’	243
Conclusion	253

CHAPTER V	258
ENLIGHTENMENT	258
Introduction	258
1. The universality of ultimate truth	260
2. <i>Ārya</i> 's modes of knowing the two truths	269
3. A buddha's exceptional mode of knowing the two truths	280
3.1. Knowing the two truths from the two conflicting perspectives ..	281
3.2. Knowing the two truths simultaneously	290
4. Go ramapa's position reconsidered	304
4.1. On the Buddha's enlightenment	305
4.2. On the path of practice taught by the Buddha	308
4.3. On the virtues of a <i>Tathāgata</i>	312
4.4. Does a <i>Tathāgata</i> exist after death?	317
Conclusion	324
 CONCLUSION	328
Soteriological and psychological perspectives	328
The ontological perspective	331
The epistemological perspective	332
The ethical perspective	334
 NOTES AND TIBETAN CITATIONS	345
GLOSSARY	391
ABBREVIATIONS	396
BIBLIOGRAPHY	404

INTRODUCTION

The buddhas' teachings of the Dharma is based on two truths: a truth of worldly conventions and an ultimate truth.

—Nāgārjuna, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXIV: 8.

The objective and scope of the research

The doctrine of the two truths lies at the very heart of the Madhyamaka¹ tradition. In this dissertation, I will argue that the Tibetan Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika offers at least two distinct philosophical and hermeneutic approaches concerning this doctrine. I will therefore demonstrate two radically distinct Tibetan ways of reading and interpreting this doctrine. I compare Tsong khapa and Go rampa's interpretations of the Indian Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika doctrine of the two truths. Since it falls beyond the scope of this thesis, I will not attempt to adjudicate which of the two readings is right about what the Indian sources mean. I do, however, quite often juxtapose the two readings against some of the more obvious assertions made by the founding fathers of the tradition—the Buddha, Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva and Candrakīrti. As far as possible, I have avoided extensive discussions on the secondary scholastic works and views propounded by the other Buddhist philosophers and their modern counterparts. I do not entirely ignore their

scholarship however. Acknowledgments of their scholarship are made when or wherever they are found appropriate, though always in the service of a direct comparison of Tsong khapa and Go rampa.

The thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter compares Tsong khapa and Go rampa's responses on three principle questions: What is divided into the two truths? How are they related? Are there two actual truths or just one truth? By examining these questions, I will show that Tsong khapa is a pluralist. For him the two truths are actual truths. Conventional truth and ultimate truth are mutually interlocking and there is no hierarchical relation between them. Both truths stand on an equal footing in terms of their ontological, epistemological and even soteriological importance. I will argue that Go rampa, on the other hand, is an absolute monist. Conventional truth, according to Go rampa, is not actual truth. Ultimate truth alone is the truth. Thus the two truths are distinct, hierarchically ordered and mutually exclusive. Ultimate truth has primacy over conventional truth in terms of ontological, epistemological and soteriological importance.

The second chapter compares the two Tibetan Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas in regard to their interpretations of the meanings and the definitions of the two truths. I will argue that, for Tsong khapa, definitions of the two truths are based on the two natures that are verified by, respectively, empirically valid and ultimately valid cognition. However, the two truths cannot, on this

account, be simply reduced to these two modes of cognition and ultimate truth, in particular, cannot be taken as metaphysically unconditioned (in other words, it is not reducible to an independent and 'ultimate' mode of cognition), even though it may be epistemologically unconditioned. For Go rampa, the position is rather different, in that ignorance and wisdom respectively determine the character, and therefore the definition of each of the two truths. The two truths are thus underlain by, and reducible to, two conflicting modes of cognition or perspectives. Ultimate truth is therefore unconditioned in the metaphysical sense—it represents an independent and 'ultimate' mode of cognition.

In the third chapter, I compare Tsong khapa and Go rampa's positions on the limits of language and conceptual mind (thought). I will argue that, for Tsong khapa, ultimate truth is, to a certain extent, both 'effable' and conceptually knowable, while, for Go rampa, it is ineffable and conceptually unknowable.

The fourth chapter compares Tsong khapa and Go rampa on the three principal modes of knowing ultimate truth: by way of not seeing it; by way of transcending conceptual elaborations; and by way of ascending to non-duality. In this chapter, I will demonstrate that Tsong khapa mobilises all three modes of knowing ultimate truth as the means to establish empirically given phenomena (accessible to the senses) as essenceless, and thus as

dependently arisen. Therefore, even transcendental and non-dual knowledge, he argues, are strictly equivalent to the knowledge of empirical phenomena as dependently arisen. Go rampa, on the other hand, mobilises the three modes of knowing ultimate truth as epistemological scaffolding to ascend to a metaphysical non-duality. He therefore argues that transcendental and non-dual knowledge are utterly distinct and independent of conventional knowledge. Thus, the knowledge of empirically given phenomena as dependently arisen and transcendental and non-dual knowledge must be distinct and contradictory.

Finally, in the fifth chapter I compare the two Tibetan Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas in their treatment of the unparalleled status of enlightened knowledge. This is where the disagreement between Tsong khapa and Go rampa reaches its climax. Tsong khapa argues that enlightenment is the perfection of knowledge of empirically given phenomena from both empirical and ultimate standpoints. Thus the unity between the two truths and their two modes of knowing attains perfect equilibrium. For Go rampa, however, enlightenment represents a total breakdown of the relation between the two truths—ontologically, epistemologically and soteriologically. On the latter account, the attainment of enlightenment culminates with the utter disappearance of the conventional world, conventional knowledge and the appearance of an absolute transcendental consciousness.

Why Tsong khapa and Go rampa?

Tsong khapa and Go rampa clearly stand out as two of the most widely read and respected figures within the contemporary Tibetan philosophical environment. Their scholarship is not only highly respected within the schools to which they each belonged, but also within the general Tibetan philosophical community. In addition, their philosophical works are also gaining wider currency among contemporary modern interpreters. Both Tsong khapa and Go rampa have systematically formulated a complete Buddhist epistemological, ontological and soteriological agenda based on their understandings of the Indian Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika. Both rank Prāsaṅgika Nirvaṇa as the most profound of all Buddhist philosophical schools. Most importantly of all, these two great figures, while interpreting the same Indian Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika, represent two distinct philosophical and hermeneutic traditions.

Tsong khapa Blo bzang Grags pa (A.D. 1357-1423) is the founder of the dGe lugs pa order of Tibetan buddhism. He wrote extensively on Madhyamaka philosophy. Included among his works are *Lam rim chen mo* and *Legs bshad snying po*—widely recognised as the two most illustrious of his principal works. *dGongs pa rab gsal* (his commentary on the *Madhyamakāvatāra*

of Candrakīrti) and *rTsa she ſik chen* (his commentary on the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* of Nāgārjuna) are the most celebrated of his commentarial works.

Go bo rab 'byams pa bSod nams Senge (A.D. 1429-1489) is considered one of the pillars of the Sa skya pa school of thought. Although he is not the founder of the Sa skya pa order, the works of Go rampa are highly regarded in the contemporary Sa skya pa learning centres and his writings receive more attention than almost all other scholars of this tradition. In all academic institutions affiliated to the Sa skya pa school, Go rampa's writings are prescribed as compulsory textbooks on the academic curriculum. Included amongst his most highly regarded writings are the two independent works, *lTa ba'i shen 'byed theg mchog gnad gyi za zer* and *bDu ma spyi don nges don rab gsal*. Also included among them are his two commentaries, *Yang dag lta ba'i 'od zer* (his commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*) and *lTa ba ngen sel* (his commentary on Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra*).

In the dGe lugs pa and Sa skya pa schools of thought, respectively, Tsong khapa and Go rampa are recognised as authentic and impeccable interpreters of Nāgārjuna's philosophy as transmitted through Candrakīrti, the pioneer of the Prāsaṅgika Nirvaṇa tradition. However, each is viewed, from the perspective of the other's School, as occupying a thoroughly problematic position. My aim here is not to reconcile these two thinkers, but

rather to develop an appreciation of their distinctive philosophical positions and the differences between them.

Methodological considerations

Since the majority of the relevant materials on Tsong khapa and Go rampa presented in my dissertation are available only in Tibetan, I have used a great many of my own translations. I have done my best to render the Tibetan versions into meaningful English. I have also made every effort to be as accurate and precise as possible in my translations. I have supported my readings—including my translations and interpretations—with relevant Tibetan textual and other evidence. Except in a few places where the Tibetan texts are too long to be cited, I have substantiated my readings by documenting the Tibetan text in the notes.

The Tibetan texts presented in the notes appear in three different formats. First, if the source of the reference is in book-form, the Tibetan text is documented in the note with its title and page (p/pp) number(s)—other bibliographic details are contained in the bibliography. Second, if the Tibetan textual source is in the traditional scriptural format, the Tibetan text appears with its folio(f/ff) number(s), for example, f.10. Third, if the textual resource is a combination of both, namely, folios compiled into a book-form, then the

note-numbering appears as page(p/pp) number(s) with 'a,' 'b,' 'c,' 'd,' etc wherein the letters refer to folios, for example, p.110a.

I have also cited many *Pāli* sources. Over the years, *Pāli* scholars have developed a variety of numbering schemes when referring to *suttas* and other texts in the *Tipitaka*. There is, thus no one, agreed numbering convention.² I have mostly taken the *suttas* appearing in this thesis from Thanissaro Bhikkhu's *Access to Insight's* translations. Thanissaro Bhikkhu uses a referencing convention to identify text or *sutta* numbers within the *Sutta Pitaka*.³ In the case of *Digha Nikāya* (DN) for example, the first *sutta* is referenced as DN 1, the twenty-first *sutta* as DN 21. A similar convention is applied in the case of *Majjhima Nikāya* (MN), *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (SN), *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (AN), *Khuddaka Nikāya* (Khṇ), *Udana* (Ud), *Itivuttaka* (Iti), and *Sutta Nipata* (Sn).

The nature of my project is such that its full attention is given to Tsong khapa and Go rampa's treatment of the two truths. Hence as far as possible, I have used Tsong khapa and Go rampa's writings as primary sources and deliberately avoided discursive secondary materials. However, I have made reference to Tibetan and English secondary sources where appropriate. If the ideas presented by other scholars appropriately fit in with the main stream of discussion, I have incorporated them within the main text. If the ideas detract the flow of ongoing discussion and debate between Tsong khapa and Go

rampa, then I have included reference to those ideas in the notes. For the most part those references consist in direct citations from the authors' works, often with very short comments.

CHAPTER I

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO TRUTHS

Introduction

This chapter examines the relationship between the two truths. It focuses on three principal issues. The first issue concerns the analysis of 'what is divided into the two truths' or on what grounds the division or distinction of the two truths is made. Technically speaking, this section explores 'what is the basis of the division (*dbye gzhi, jñeya*) into the two truths?' The precise identification of the basis of the division is critical for both Tsong khapa and Go rampa. For the former, it relates to his effort to maintain a non-paradoxical compatibility between the two truths, while for the latter, it relates to his effort to maintain a paradoxical relationship between the two truths. As we shall see, Tsong khapa argues that the 'objects of knowledge' (*shes bya*) constitute the basis of the divisions, and therefore grounds his exposition on the dual nature of empirically given phenomena. Go rampa argues that 'mere mind' (*citta or manas, blo tsam*) constitutes the basis of the divisions, and grounds his exposition on two conflicting perspectives.

The second issue concerns the way in which the two truths are related. Here it will be argued that, for Tsong khapa, the two truths constitute a 'single ontological identity' (*ngo bo gcig*) with 'different conceptual identities' (*ldog pa tha dad*). Whereas Go rampa argues that the truths are separate in a way that is 'incompatible with their unity' (*gcig pa bkag pa'i tha dad*) or identity.

Here two rather technical phrases provide the context for our examination of the relationship between the two truths. The Tibetan phrase *ngo bo gcig* used in Tsong khapa's philosophy, particularly in the context of the relationship between the two truths is usually translated in English as 'one entity'.¹ Although 'entity' has some connotations of 'being', as pointed out in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, it usually refers to a 'thing'.² In Tsong khapa's sense, in spite of the fact that there is an underlying assumption that the two truths constitute 'one entity' or 'one thing' or 'one phenomena', the *ngo bo*, it does not as such directly refer to a 'thing'. Even in the ordinary Tibetan discourses, *ngo bo* does not have any explicit reference to things. There is however an implicit reference to things since *ngo bo* always refers to the identity, nature or the property of that thing.

The Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary (*Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*) defines *ngo bo* as *rang bzhin*, meaning 'nature,' or *gnas lugs*, meaning 'mode of being'.³ It also explains *ngo bo gcig pa* as *rang bzhin tha mi thad pa*, meaning,

“that which has no distinct nature like for instance being a jar and being impermanent”.⁴ Making it even clearer, the dictionary enumerates the *rang bzhin gcig pa* meaning, 'single nature' and *bdag nyid gcig pa*, meaning, 'identical character' as the synonyms of *ngo bo gcig pa*, meaning, 'single ontological identity'.⁵ Considering these issues, instead of 'entity', we shall choose to translate *ngo bo* as 'ontological identity', thus *ngo bo gcig* as 'single ontological identity', or as 'nature'⁶ interchangeably, depending on context. As we shall see, the analysis of the relationship between the two truths for Tsong khapa amounts to analysing the relationship between the two natures.

The second Tibetan phrase is *ldog pa tha dad*. This phrase is usually translated in English as 'isolates'⁷ or less frequently as 'opposites',⁸ 'distinguisher',⁹ or even 'under description'.¹⁰ However, *ldog pa* is explained in *The Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary* (*Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*) as “a phenomenon that appears to conceptual mind as being different categories ... or it is that which appears not being different. For instance, the *ldog pa* of a jar is the aspect which is merely not being of the non-jar like the form that appears to conceptual mind”.¹¹ While translating *ldog pa* as 'distinguisher', Dreyfus also points out that the *ldog pa* of a phenomenon “is its conceptual identity. It is the property of a phenomenon being not what it is not. For example, a jar is distinct from everything (that is not jar). This is explained by the *Collected Topics* to be as its distinguisher. Since such a distinguisher is a

distinction made by thought, it is conceptual".¹² Similarly, Dreyfus explains "when we think that the Vedic language is impermanent, we apply the distinguisher, that is, the concept of impermanence, to the Vedic language".¹³

As the above explanations of the phrase reveal, *ldog pa* is a term more to do with conceptual identification than the thing itself. In order to be closer to the meaning at issue here, and although the translation is less literal, we shall tentatively use the English term 'conceptual identity' in place of the Tibetan phrase *ldog pa*. *Ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad* is therefore tentatively rendered as 'single ontological identity with different conceptual identities'. These two Tibetan phrases are conjunctively explained in *The Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary* as follows: "in spite of not having distinct natures, exists as separate conceptual identities. For example, [it is like the conceptual relationship between] a jar and object of knowledge, being impermanent and things, mankind and their causal condition, the five aggregates and the like".¹⁴

The final issue to be taken up in this chapter is the question of whether there really are two truths. By applying the principle of 'single ontological identity' (*ngo bo gcig*) with 'different conceptual identities' (*ldog pa tha dad*), Tsong khapa argues that there are two truths and that this is coherent. While applying the principle of 'distinct and incompatible' relationships between

the two truths (*gcig pa bkag pa'i tha dad*), Go rampa proposes that there is in fact only one truth.

1. What is divided into the two truths?

'Jam dbyangs bZhad pa (1648-1722)¹⁵ and Hopkins¹⁶ note six different bases of the division asserted by non-dGe lugs pa scholars. They include (1) mere appearance (*snang tsam*), (2) entities ranging from material form to omniscience (*gzugs nas rnam mkhyen bar gyi ngo bo*), (3) non-reified objects (*sgro ma btags pa'i yul*), (4) unanalysed objects (*ma rtags ma dpyad pa'i yul*), (5) truth (*bden pa*) and (6) unspecified basis. Newland¹⁷ notes as many as seven different ways of positing the basis of the two truths among the non-dGe lugs pa Mādhyamikas. They are (1) truths, (2) all entities from phenomena such as forms through to omniscient consciousness, (3) mere appearances, (4) unanalysed knowables, (5) phenomena, (6) perspectives, and (7) mere minds.

1.1.The objects of knowledge as the basis of the division

The lists of the above different positions adequately indicate that there is no unanimity among Tibetan Mādhyamikas in terms of their views regarding the basis of the divisions of the two truths (*bden gnyis dbye gzhi*). Let us first turn to Tsong khapa's account. Although Tsong khapa is aware of the different views expressed by his predecessors on the division of the two

truths, he maintains that 'objects of knowledge' (*shes bya, jñeya*) are the basis of the division of the two truths.¹⁸ For him, this means that the two truths relate to two different objects of knowledge. Tsong khapa relies on the Buddha's discourse to support this view. In the *Pitāputrasamāgama sūtra*, the Buddha states:

...The *Tathāgata* understands both the conventional (*kun rdzob*) and the ultimate (*don dam*), for the objects of knowledge (*shes bya*) exhaustively comprise conventional and ultimate truths. Besides, the *Bhagavān* perfectly sees, perfectly understands and thoroughly actualises emptiness. Because of this, he is described as omniscient (*thams cad mkhyen pa, sarvajña*).¹⁹

It also says:

The 'Knower of the Universe' taught these two truths without hearing from others. There is the empirical, and likewise the ultimate. There can never be a third truth.²⁰

The object of knowledge (*shes bya, jñeya*) is defined as "an object that is cognisable (*blo'i yul du bya rung ba*). Whether it is a pillar, a jar or any other phenomenon, it must be an object of cognition in general, [cognitions] ranging from that of the [ordinary] sentient beings through to enlightened beings".²¹ This definition, Tsong khapa agrees, attempts to capture any thing knowable in the broadest possible sense. This is necessary since the Buddha maintains knowledge of the two truths to be necessary for enlightenment,

and so the understanding of the two truths must constitute an exhaustive understanding of all objects of knowledge.

Tsong khapa agrees with Go rampa that the doctrine of the two truths is pedagogically important in conveying the Buddha's message. Yet Tsong khapa firmly believes that pedagogical considerations are not the primary reason for the Buddha's distinction between the two truths. For Tsong khapa, the most important reason for the Buddha's division of the objects of knowledge into two truths is to reveal that every empirically (*tha snyad*) or conventionally (*kun rdzob*) given phenomenon possesses dual natures (*ngo bo*): namely, the empirical nature (or conventional nature) and the ultimate nature. Yet, one is putatively described as false and deceptive while the other is described as true and non-deceptive. "The division of two truths", as Hopkins puts it, "emphasise two types of objects of consciousness, truths and falsities. Both, however, are falsely existent or falsely established because neither is independent; each depends on imputing consciousness and on the other".²²

Since both of them are realities pertaining to each phenomenon, the division of the two truths means the division of each phenomenon into two natures. Thus, the division of two truths "reveals that it makes sense to divide even the nature of a single entity like the sprout into dual natures—its conventional and its ultimate natures".²³ The fact that the Buddha divides the

nature of each phenomenon into the two truths, according to Tsong khapa, “demonstrates that the nature of even one phenomenon, the sprout for instance, can be divided into two natures—one of the empirical (*kun rdzob*) and the other of the ultimate (*don dam*)” and he goes on, “It does not however show that the one nature of the sprout is itself divided into two truths in relation to ordinary beings (*so skye, prthagjana*) and to *āryas* (*‘phags pa*)”.²⁴

The division of the nature of each phenomenon into two does not contradict Tsong khapa’s own claim that the two truths constitute a ‘single ontological identity’ (*ngo bo gcig*) with ‘different conceptual identities’ (*ldog pa tha dad*). As we shall see, these two ideas are, in fact, interdependent and mutually supporting. The idea behind the twofold nature is central to the possibility of there being a single ‘ontological’ identity with different ‘conceptual’ identities. Likewise, the notion of a single ontological identity with distinct conceptual identities is central to the idea of of a single phenomenon with two natures.

How can the single ontological identity of each phenomenon be bifurcated into two distinct conceptual identities? Essentially this is a matter of the way in which the single ontological identity appears to a cognising consciousness, both deceptively and non-deceptively. The two natures correspond to these deceptive or non-deceptive modes of appearance and as such, while they both belong to the same ontological identity, they are

epistemologically or conceptually mutually exclusive.²⁵ Take the sprout for instance. For it to exist is necessarily for it to exhibit a dual nature and yet those two natures cannot be ontologically distinct. The ultimate nature of the sprout cannot be separated from its conventional nature—its colour, texture, shape, extension and so on. As an object of knowledge, the sprout retains its single ontological identity, but it is known through its two natures and these two natures exclude one another so far as knowledge is concerned even though neither can be separated from the other in terms of existence. The mind that verifies the false and the deceptive empirical nature of the sprout thus does not have direct access to its non-deceptive ultimate nature. Similarly, the mind that verifies the non-deceptive ultimate nature of the sprout does not have direct access to the false and deceptive empirical nature of the sprout. Newland explains:

A table and its emptiness are a single entity. When an ordinary conventional mind takes a table as its object of observation, it sees a table. When a mind of ultimate analysis searches for the table, it finds the emptiness of the table. Hence, the two truths are posited in relation to a single entity by way of the perspectives of the observing consciousness. This is as close as Geluk-bas will come to defining the two truths as perspectives.²⁶

It is important to recognise that, for Tsong khapa, the two types of verifying consciousness do not imply two different individuals. Each cognitive agent is potentially capable of verifying both the truths. Thus each possesses all the

cognitive resources enabling the verification of the two natures. The model that Tsong khapa articulates in this way is the key to a non-paradoxical compatibility between the two truths and their verifying consciousnesses. If the two verifying consciousnesses belonged to the two different individuals or types of individuals—empirically valid consciousness for an ordinary being and ultimately valid consciousness for an *ārya* (as Go rampa would argue)—then the two verifying consciousnesses would conflict with each other. The former would constitute ignorance, while the latter would constitute wisdom. Realising this, Newland also writes:

These distinctions are critical to the Ge-luk-ba philosophical project, the preservation of non-paradoxical compatibility between the two truths. The conventional mind that finds a table is not discredited by the ultimate mind that finds the emptiness of the table. The first is valid because the table (a conventional truth) does exist; the second is also valid because the table's real nature is an emptiness of inherent existence (an ultimate truth).²⁷

For Tsong khapa, however, the two verifying consciousnesses stand on an equal footing such that neither is superior to the other. Moreover, they may both belong to the same cognitive agent. Since the mutual network between the two verifying consciousnesses is a necessary condition for realising both the truths, in spite of each having different primary roles, they are mutually entailing.

1.2. 'Mere mind' (*blo tsam*) as the basis of the division

Let us now turn to Go rampa's account of the basis of the division of the two truths. Go rampa outlines what he describes as the four bases of the division.

They are:

- 'mere mind' (*blo tsam*);
- 'mere interdependence' (*rten 'brel tsam*);
- 'mere objects of knowledge' (*shes bya tsam*); and
- 'mere subjects of the Buddha's discourses' (*gsung rab gyi brjod bya tsam*).²⁸

Go rampa himself does not explicitly spell out what the qualification 'mere' (*tsam*) is doing here. However, considering the overall direction of his philosophical and soteriological agenda, suffice it to say that he intends to emphasise the qualified basis of the division of the two truths.

In emphasising the first basis of the division, 'mere mind', Go rampa rules out the possibility of any objective reference as the basis of that division. This means that the distinctions between the two truths become purely subjective—a matter of mere mind. Closely connected to 'mere mind' is the second possible basis, 'mere interdependence' (*rten 'brel tsam*). The term 'mere interdependence' in Go rampa's usage implies that the divisions of the two truths are simply dependent on ignorance and wisdom. In other words, if there were no ignorance and wisdom, not only the distinctions between the

two truths, but also the two truths themselves would not exist. Go rampa's third basis is 'mere objects of knowledge' (*shes bya tsam*). For him, all objects of knowledge excluding ultimate truth are thought constructs, reifications of ignorance. Ultimate truth is none other than the transcendental wisdom itself. Thus, by suggesting that the basis of the division of the two truths is 'mere objects of knowledge' Go rampa does not contradict his earlier claim that basis of the division of the two truths is 'mere mind'. Go rampa claims that the Buddha arbitrarily fabricated conventional truth purely for a pedagogical purpose. Hence, 'mere subjects of the Buddha's discourses' (*gsung rab gyi brjod bya tsam*) is also taken as the fourth plausible basis of the divisions of the two truths.

Since all four options equally emphasise the subjective distinction of the two truths, so, in Go rampa's view, all four bases for the division of the two truths are mutually compatible. "There is no conflict at all in positing either 'mere mind'...'mere interdependence'...'mere objects of knowledge'...'mere subjects of the Buddha's discourses' to be the basis of the division", says Go rampa.²⁹ Nevertheless, Go rampa gives special emphasis to 'mere mind' and 'mere subjects of the Buddha's discourses'. Of the former, he states: "Despite the fact that there are no two truths in terms of the object's mode of existence (*gnas tshul*), it means that the truth is divided into two in terms of [the contrasting perspectives] of mind that sees the mode of existence and the

mind that does not see the mode of existence. This makes perfect sense".³⁰

The point here is to stress the subjective basis of the division at issue. The division of the two truths cannot be grounded ontologically, for there is only one reality. The two truths are divided according to the contrasting cognitive experiences of those individuals who see only the phenomenal world and those who see the reality. He who sees only phenomena, according to Go rampa, is ignorant, and he who sees reality, rather than the phenomena, is wise. This is because he who sees phenomena is caught within the web of conceptual elaborations, and he who sees reality has transcended these conceptual elaborations.

Go rampa also emphasises the pedagogical necessity of the two truths. This is why he takes the 'subjects of the Buddha's discourses' (*gsung rab gyi brjod bya tsam*) as one of the bases for the division of the two truths:

[Besides, reality] cannot be revealed through linguistic expressions (*sgra*) in the context of the Madhyamaka literature. Yet, it is nominally expressed through terms. The two truths, although indivisible, are presented to disciples as distinct. In this way, if we see the consistency of the [whole philosophical system], from the beginning until the end, I think [the subjects of the Buddha's discourses provide] a perfectly plausible [basis of the division].³¹

Although all phenomena are entirely false and deceptive with no grounding in reality whatsoever, Go rampa explicitly claims that the Buddha posited (*sgros brtags pa, samāropa*) empirically given phenomena as empirical truths

(*tha snyad bden pa*, *vyavahārika-satya*) for pedagogical reasons. Since ordinary beings are obsessed with empirical phenomena, the Buddha saw the practical application of positing empirical truth. The Buddha, according to Go rampa, fabricates the idea of empirical truth knowing its absolute futility, and yet is at the same time aware of its provisional utility. He then mobilises it as an instructional device to gradually coax his disciples beyond the realm of the phenomenal world.

In terms of the way things exist (*gnas tsul*), it is not possible to draw distinctions between characteristic and characterised, the basis of division and the divided and the like. However, when empirical truth (*tha snyad bden pa*) is fabricated (*sgro brtags pa*) as a means of instructional device for disciples, it is important to consider the basis of division like the divided components.³²

As far as Go rampa is concerned, the Buddha teaches about empirical truth, not because he sees some reality in empirical truth, but because he sees it as simply a means to lead ordinary beings into the ultimate realm from the delusional worldly realm. The empirical world, according to this view, provides purely instrumental rather than actual truth. "A relative or conventional truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*)," as Lindtner puts it "serves as the means for obtaining the absolute or ultimate truth (*paramārthasatya*)".³³ Furthermore, he explicitly defends Go rampa's view that "the theory of *satyadvaya* is above all a pedagogical device".³⁴

In discussing this issue of the pedagogical necessity of the two truths Go rampa paraphrases his earlier statement regarding 'mere mind' (*blo tsam*) as the basis of the division of the two truths.³⁵ He writes that "based on the subjective consciousness (*yul can gyi blo*) truth is [divided into] twofold: empirical truth and ultimate truth".³⁶ This latter claim, although it reinforces Go rampa's preference for the subjective (*yul can*) division of the two truths over the objective (*yul*), does not expressly demonstrate Go rampa's rejection of the idea that there is any objective reference for the division. But then he writes: "here in the Madhyamaka literature, it is not coherent to divide the object *per se* (*yul rang ngos nas*) into the two truths".³⁷

In his commentary on the *Madhyamakāvatāra* Go rampa states: "a basis *per se* is separated in terms of its mode of appearances. Otherwise in terms of the object there is no separate division".³⁸ Since empirical phenomena are entirely false and deceptive, one cannot take the division between the two truths to be a division that applies to empirical phenomena themselves—what is false and deceptive cannot be divided into the deceptive and the non-deceptive, the false and the not-false. As Go rampa sees it, this would amount to creating an entirely non-deceptive truth from totally false and deceptive phenomena. Go rampa forcefully summarises his view as follows:

Here in the Madhyamaka system, the object itself cannot be divided into two truths. Empirical truth and ultimate truth are divided in terms of the mode of apprehensions (*mthong tshul*). In terms of the subject

apprehending falsehood and the subject apprehending truth; or mistaken and unmistaken apprehensions (*'khrul ma 'khrul*), or deluded or undeluded apprehensions (*rmongs ma rmongs*), or erroneous or nonerroneous apprehensions (*phyin ci log ma log*), or valid or invalid cognitions (*tshad ma yin min*).³⁹

And he adds:

Because two truths are posited in terms of the subjective consciousness (*yul can gyi blo*) depending on whether it is a deluded (*rmongs*) or non-deluded (*ma rmongs*); a perception of falsity (*brdzun pa thong ba*), or perception of reality (*yang dag mthong ba*) and a mistaken (*khrul*) or an unmistaken (*ma khrul*), the position of [the truths] in terms of the subjective consciousness (*yul can gyi blo*) is unanimously accepted by all Prāsaṅgikas and Svātantrikas of India.⁴⁰

It is worth underlining the two points at issue here. Since the minds of ordinary beings are always deluded, mistaken and erroneous they falsely experience conventional truth. Conventional truth is thus strictly posited only in relation to the perspective of ordinary beings. Ordinary beings always assume the sensory experiences of empirical entities as veridical, despite the fact that they are utterly false. However, since the wisdom of *ārya's* meditative equipoise and enlightened minds are never mistaken, always non-deluded and non-erroneous, they flawlessly experience ultimate truth. Ultimate truth is thus posited strictly in relation to an *ārya's* and a buddha's perspective.

Among other Tibetans who maintain Go rampa's line of argument in respect of the basis of the division of the two truths are kLong chen,⁴¹ Sa paṅ,⁴² Mi pham,⁴³ Rong ston,⁴⁴ sTag tsang,⁴⁵ Śākya mChog ldan⁴⁶ and Mi skyod rDo rje.⁴⁷ They all agree with Go rampa that the distinctions between the two truths are purely subjective. Except for some minor linguistic differences, they all argue that the two truths are reducible to the two conflicting perspectives, namely, ignorance and wisdom. Modern scholars including T. R. V. Murti,⁴⁸ La Vallée Poussin,⁴⁹ Jaideva Singh,⁵⁰ Chr. Lindtner⁵¹ and C. W. Huntington⁵² also endorse Go rampa's approach. Guy Newland also notes "many Western scholars hold that the two truths are not two types of object, but rather two viewpoints, perspectives, or types of consciousness".⁵³ Streng, for example maintains this position:

Since there are no intrinsically different objects of knowledge, the distinction between 'mundane truth' and 'ultimate truth' does not pertain to different objects of knowledge, e.g., the world and ultimate reality. It refers, rather to the manner by which 'things' are perceived.⁵⁴

In addition, he states that:

[T]here are two forms of understanding: world-ensconced truth and the highest truth... The distinction...is a difference of attitude or awareness about oneself in relation to existence. It is foremost an epistemological difference, which becomes an ontological difference insofar as knowledge determines what one becomes.⁵⁵

Elsewhere Streng writes, “Thus, the basic difference between conventional and ultimate truth is...a difference of the perspective...”.⁵⁶

As we have already seen, according to Tsong khapa, the object of knowledge as that which can be known by means of two different modes of cognition, each of which may be available to the same cognising agent, though verified through different forms of consciousness, that is the basis of the division of the two truths. At the heart of Tsong khapa’s argument lies the point that every empirically given object of knowledge consists of dual natures—conventional and ultimate—and these two natures form the objective basis of the two truths. Despite the fact that the different cognitions that correspond to the two natures engage with the same phenomenon, Tsong khapa argues that his view is not committed to the subjective division of the two truths that is advanced by Go rampa, since the two modes of cognition have an objective reference, namely the two natures that belong to that single phenomenon. Therefore, as Hopkins puts it, “there are standards and criteria for valid establishment, and in this sense both suchness and the phenomena qualified by it are objective”.⁵⁷

While Tsong khapa distances himself from the subjective division of the two truths, Go rampa on the other hand, makes every attempt to demonstrate that the distinctions between the two truths are indeed purely subjective. He therefore argues that 'mere mind' (*blo tsam*) provides the primary basis for the

division of the two truths. Unlike Tsong khapa, Go rampa holds that the two truths do not have any objective basis. Instead they are entirely reducible to the experiences of the deluded minds of ordinary beings and the experiences of the wisdom of *āryas*.

There is one last crucial point to be noted before we move to the next section. According to Tsong khapa, the cognitive agent who understands the two truths may be one and the same individual. Each agent has all the cognitive resources that are potentially capable of accessing both the two truths. In the case of ordinary beings, they have only conceptual access to ultimate truth. The *āryas* who are in the process of learning have direct access to ultimate truth even if only intermittently. Enlightened beings, however, always have simultaneous access to both the truths. The view held by Go rampa argues for separate cognitive agents corresponding to each of the two truths. Ordinary beings have direct access to conventional truth, but are utterly incapable of accessing ultimate truth. The *āryas* in training have direct access to both ultimate and conventional truths. Buddhas, on the other hand, only have access to ultimate truth. They have strictly no access to conventional truth whatsoever.

In the following section, we shall take up the relationship between the two truths as the focus for our comparative analysis. As we shall see, the

relationship between the two truths is deeply entangled with the issue concerning the basis of the division of the truths.

2. How are the two truths related?

Before we move on, there are two important background issues that we must remember. In formulating an account of the relationship between the two truths, Tsong khapa places great emphasis on the relationship between 'the two natures of a single entity'. By emphasising this, Tsong khapa is implicitly suggesting that the two truths constitute one and the same phenomenon (or entity or thing)—they do not, in any way, represent two ontologically distinct identities. As a consequence, in the account of the relationship between the two truths, Tsong khapa's primary aim is to establish the mutually compatible relationship between two modes of cognition that relate to the *two* natures of a *single* phenomenon or entity. In other words, for Tsong khapa, the two modes of cognition and the two natures corresponding to the two truths are underlain by one phenomenon. In contrast, however, Go rampa views the relationship between the two truths as one between two distinct and incompatible modes of cognition that do not refer to a single entity with two natures, but rather constitute two modes of cognition only *one* of which refers us to a real phenomenon.

2.1. The two truths are ontologically identical but conceptually distinct

The principle of 'single ontological identity' (*ngo bo gcig*) with 'distinct conceptual identities' (*ldog pa tha dad*), pointed out earlier, is founded on the concept of the two natures. The two natures not only serve as the basic reference point for Tsong khapa in his exposition of the basis of the division of the two truths, of their meanings and definitions, but they also serve as the basic ontological reference for his account of the relationship between the two truths.

Tsong khapa traces the notion of the two natures back to Candrakirti. "[The Buddha] said that all things have two natures—those found by perceivers of reality and of falsities", says Candrakirti in the *Madhyamakāvatāra* [VI:23].⁵⁸ While glossing statement in the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, Candrakirti also writes: "All phenomena—interior and exterior—, such as conditioned phenomena and the sprout, have two natures".⁵⁹ In mkHas grub rje's (1385-1438) words, the point can be rephrased in this way: "as both the root texts of the [*Madhyamakāvatāra*] and its commentary maintain...all conventional and ultimate phenomena possess natures, and if their natures exist they must be either one or different. For if [two natures] exist they must be either the same or different".⁶⁰ Since the dual natures are ontologically locked together within the framework of each

phenomenon, it is obvious that the two truths constitute the same phenomenon. So, the question concerning the relationship between the two truths is the same question as that which concerns the relationship between the two natures. To find out the relationship between the two truths is thus equivalent to examining the precise relationship between the two natures.

So, how are the two natures related? Are they identical or distinct?⁶¹ According to the view held by Tsong khapa, the short answer is that the two natures are neither identical nor distinct in any unqualified sense. The two natures are related in terms of a single ontological identity with distinct conceptual identities—thus they are both the same and different. Since the two natures are the basis of the relationship between the two truths, so the relationship between the two truths will reflect the relationship between the two natures. Ultimate truth and conventional truth thus possess the same ontological status. As the two natures are two natures of the same ontological structure, so the two truths are truths that relate to the same ontological structure also.

Tsong khapa likens the relationship between the two truths, and the two natures, to the relationship between “being conditioned (*byas pa*) and being impermanent (*mi rtag pa*)”.⁶² He borrows this point from Nāgārjuna’s *Bodhicittavivaraṇa* (*byang chub sems ’grel*), wherein the latter states: “Reality (*de nyid, tathatā*) is not perceived as separate from conventionality (*kun rdzob*,

saṃvṛti) [67]. The conventionality is explained to be empty. Empty alone is the conventionality”, and therefore for Nāgārjuna, “if one of them does not exist neither will the other, like being conditioned and being impermanent” [68].⁶³

Commenting on this passage from *Bodhicittavivaraṇa*, Tsong khapa writes:

The first four lines show that things as they really are are not ontologically distinct from that of the conventionality. The latter two lines establish their relationship such that if one did not exist neither could the other (*med na mi 'bung ba'i 'brel ba*). This, in fact, is equivalent to their being constituted by a single-property relationship (*bdag cig pa'i 'brel ba*). Therefore, like the case of being conditioned and being impermanent, [the relation between the two truths] is demonstrated as one of a single ontological identity (*ngo bo gcig pa*).⁶⁴

The way in which the two truths are related is thus analogous to the way in which being conditioned and being impermanent are related. So far as the character of being conditioned and being impermanent is concerned, they are ontologically identical and mutually entailing. Whatever is impermanent is also conditioned; likewise whatever is conditioned is also impermanent. If impermanence did not exist, conditioned phenomena would not exist; similarly, if conditioned phenomenon did not exist, impermanence would not exist.

The ontological identity between being conditioned and being impermanent does not imply identity in all and every respect. So far as their mode of appearance is concerned, conditioned and impermanent phenomena

are distinct and contrasting. Impermanence always presents itself to the cognising mind as impermanent, but not as conditioned. Similarly, being conditioned always presents itself to its cognising mind as conditioned, but not as impermanent. Similarly, it does not necessarily follow that the two truths are identical in every respect just because they share a common ontological identity. So far as the modes of appearance are concerned, ultimate nature and conventional nature are distinct. The mode of appearance of ultimate nature is non-deceptive and consistent with its mode of existence, while the mode of appearance of conventional nature is deceptive and inconsistent with its mode of existence.

Conventional nature is uncritically verified by empirical valid cognition whereas ultimate nature is critically verified by ultimately valid cognition. Hence, just as ultimate nature is inaccessible to the empirically valid cognition for its uncritical mode of engagement, so too, is conventional nature inaccessible to ultimately valid cognition for its critical mode of engagement. This is how, in Tsong khapa's view, the truths differ conceptually in spite of sharing a common ontological identity.

In summarising Tsong khapa's points, mKhas grub rJe writes: "the two truths are therefore of the same nature, but different conceptual identities (*ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad*). They have a single-nature relationship such that if one did not exist neither could the other (*med na mi 'byung ba'i bdag gcig*

'*brel*) just like being conditioned and impermanent".⁶⁵ In commenting on dGe lugs pa thought, Newland also echoes the same point:

That the two truths are 'different isolates' [*ldog pa tha dad*] means, for example, that a table and its emptiness can be distinguished in terms of how they are understood by a conceptual consciousness. To say that two things are different isolates is to make only the most minimal distinction between them. Since conceptual consciousnesses often operate under the sway of language, things are different isolates as soon as they are given different names—even if those names refer to the same object.⁶⁶

Since the meaning of 'distinct conceptual identities' (*ldog pa tha dad*), in Tsong khapa's view, is rooted in the two natures, the conceptual distinction between the two truths must *not* be understood as a pure epistemological distinction. The distinction between the two truths, according to Tsong khapa, is not reducible to two different perspectives, or even to two different linguistic practices. Since both the truths have their own objective references, namely the two natures, they are not reducible to subjective viewpoints nor are they reducible to merely a difference of language. José Ignacio Cabezón is one commentator who does emphasise the distinction between the two truths as entirely linguistic and writes that the two truths "although having the same referent... have different names, different designations, being the opposites of different entities *qua* names".⁶⁷ Both Newland and Cabezón are correct in pointing out that 'distinct conceptual identities' (*ldog pa tha dad*) in Tsong

khapa's sense are distinctions drawn by the conceptual consciousness, and so clearly have a linguistic component. They are also correct in pointing out, as I have above, that the two truths have only 'one entity' or 'one phenomenon' as their referent. Yet to say, as a consequence, that the differences between the two truths are purely linguistic in nature, is to ignore Tsong khapa's own emphasis on the role of the two natures to which the two truths correspond. The distinction between those two natures is not merely linguistic.

Although the two truths presuppose, according to Tsong khapa, a single phenomenon or entity as their common referent, this does not mean that they share exactly the same *objective* referent. Ultimate truth has the ultimate nature of the phenomenon as its referent, while conventional truth has the conventional nature of the same phenomenon as its referent. Thus, while engaging with the same phenomenon, both verifying consciousnesses have their own distinctive referents according to the manner in which they operate—one critically, the other uncritically. This latter point is one of Tsong khapa's central theses. It allows him to ground both the identity and difference that stems from the relationship between the two truths on the single ontological identity and different conceptual nature of the one phenomenon. In doing this, he effectively dismisses the idea of treating the difference between the truths as merely one of contradictory perspectives or different linguistic practices. Thus he allows equal significance to both the

epistemological and ontological issues involved in the relationship between the two truths. To say that they share a single ontological identity with different conceptual identities does not mean, therefore, that the distinctions at issue are purely epistemological. This is consistent with his position that the two truths stand on an equal footing and do not constitute an ontological or epistemological hierarchy.

2.2. The two truths are distinct and incompatible

Let us now examine how Go rampa formulates the relationship between the two truths. From Go rampa's point of view, the position advanced by Tsong khapa is utterly unacceptable. To say that the two truths are ontologically identical is similar to equating ignorance with wisdom. Jay Garfield precisely summarises Go rampa's general approach to the doctrine of the two truths when he writes:

By distinguishing the conventional from the ultimate, it is tempting to disparage the former in contrast to the latter, developing a sort of theory of one truth and one falsehood. This is done if one reifies the entities associated with the ultimate, such as emptiness or impermanence or the Four Noble Truths, or the Buddha. Then one treats these as real, intrinsically existent phenomena. The conventional then become the world of illusion.⁶⁸

As we saw above, the main point of reference in Go rampa's exposition of the basis of the two truths is what he calls 'mere mind' (*blo tsam*) since this is what underpins the claim that the distinction between the two truths is purely subjective. Moreover, because Go rampa denies that there is any ontological unity that underlies the distinction between the two truths—that distinction is one of 'mere mind' such that the two truths cannot both have an objective referent—the two truths must constitute conflicting and incompatible perspectives. As a consequence, the relationship between the two truths is, according to this view, equivalent to the relationship between the two conflicting perspectives—namely, ignorance and wisdom. The question now becomes: How is ignorance related to wisdom? Or how does wisdom relate to ignorance? In answer, Go rampa suggests four possible sets of relationships between the two truths. He borrows them from Sa paṇ:

Generally the twofold division is analysed in order to determine (1) whether its members are substantially distinct (*rdzas tha dad*) like a mattress and a jar. (2) Or [to determine whether they are] single identity with distinct conceptual identities (*ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad*) like being conditioned (*byas pa*) and impermanent (*mi rtag pa*), (3) or coreferential but different in meaning (*rnams grangs pa'i tha dad*) like 'moon' and 'that which has a cooling effect (*bsil zer byed pa*)', (4) or 'distinct' in the sense that is incompatible with oneness (*gcig pa gdag pa'i tha dad*) like entity (*dngos po*) and entitilessness (*dngos med*). This [relationship] between the two truths also has to be analysed in this way.⁶⁹

Among these four sets of relations, Go rampa ignores the first—substantially distinct (*rdzas tha dad*)—and the third—co-referential, but different in meaning (*rnams grangs pa'i tha dad*). Because his adversary, Tsong khapa, advocates the second type of relationship—'single ontological identity with distinct conceptual identities' (*ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad*), Go rampa rejects it. He formulates his own account based on the fourth type of relation—that the two truths are 'distinct in the sense they are incompatible with unity' (*gcig pa dgag pa'i tha dad*) like entity (*dngos po*) and entitilessness (*dngos med*).

For Go rampa, the relationship between the two truths is a straightforward one. In the ultimate sense, he argues that the two truths transcend identity and difference.⁷⁰ "The transcendence of identity and difference from the ultimate standpoint is synonymous with the transcendence of identity and difference from the purview of the *ārya's* meditative equipoise".⁷¹ However, from the empirical standpoint (*tha snyad du*), he claims that the two truths are 'distinct in the sense that they are incompatible with their unity' (*gcig pa bkag pa'i tha dad*). He likens this relation with that between 'entity' (*dngos po*) and 'entitilessness' (*dngo med*).⁷²

In claiming that the two truths are distinct and incompatible, Go rampa asserts that the two truths are both ontologically and epistemologically distinct. Since what is divided into the two truths is 'mere mind' (*blo tsam*), it is obvious that there is no single phenomenon that could serve as the

objective referent for both. This also means that the two truths must be construed as corresponding to distinct spheres belonging to distinct modes of consciousness: conventional truth corresponds to ignorance and ultimate truth to wisdom. It is thus inappropriate to describe the relationship between the two truths, and their corresponding modes of consciousness, in terms of two ways of looking at the *same* entity. Although the two truths can be thought of as two ways of *looking*, one of ignorance and the other of wisdom, there is no *same* entity at which both look. There is nothing common between the two truths and if they are both ways of looking then they do not look at the same thing.

Go rampa's formulation of the distinct and incompatible relationship between the two truths is also reinforced by his objections launched against the notion that the two truths share a common ontological identity. One of these objections states that:⁷³

If two truths were identical in their natures, then metaphorically speaking, the hairs seen through blurred vision and the nonexistence of hairs seen through a correct vision would absurdly become identical.

This would follow from the two truths being identical in their natures.⁷⁴

According to this view, the relationship between conventional truth and ultimate truth is comparable to the relationship between the 'hairs seen through cataracts' and the 'absence of falling hair seen through correct vision'. Although this is a metaphor, it has a direct application to the matter

of how the two truths are related. Conventional truth is analogous to the seeing of falling hairs as a result of cataracts: both conventional truth and such false seeing are illusory, in the ontological sense that there is nothing to which each corresponds, and in the epistemological sense that there is no true knowledge in either case. On this basis, ultimate truth is therefore analogous, ontologically and epistemologically, to the true seeing unaffected by cataracts in which there are no falling hairs. Just as cataracts give rise to illusory appearances, so ignorance, according to Go rampa, gives rise to all conventional truths—wisdom, on the other hand, gives rise to ultimate truth. As each is the result of a different state, so there is no link, either in terms of some common ontological identity or some common epistemological or conceptual identity, to which both the conventional and the ultimate are related.

For Go rampa, the idea that the two truths refer to one ontological identity with different conceptual identities is highly problematic. He takes it as equivalent to claiming that there is an ontological identity between the falling hairs seen as a result of cataracts and the absence of falling hairs seen in the absence of such cataracts. Likewise, to say that the two truths share an epistemological link is equivalent to claiming that there is an epistemological connection between the seeing of falling hairs by someone with cataracts and

the seeing from which falling hairs are absent experienced by someone with healthy vision.

Go rampa rejects the identity of the two truths by relying on the *Samdhinirmocana sūtra*. This *sūtra*, according to him, exposes four absurdities in claiming that the two truths are ontologically identical.⁷⁵ If the two truths were identical, then:

[1] Just as the childish (*byis pa*) directly perceive conventional things such as form and sound, they would absurdly directly perceive ultimate truth. [2] Just as conventional [truth] comprises many divisions of categories (*spros pa'i dbye ba*) such as form and sound, even so, ultimate [truth] would absurdly comprise many divisions (*bye ba du ma*). [3] Just as the conventional [truth] by definition (*mtshan nyid*) has nature of (*rang bzhin*) deluded ignorance (*kun nas nyon mongs pa*), ultimate truth would [absurdly] be the same. [4] Just as conventional meaning is not sought apart from what is seen by the childish, ultimate truth would absurdly be the same.⁷⁶

By reading the *Samdhinirmocana sūtra* as presenting the relationship between the two truths as distinct and incompatible, Go rampa does not mean to suggest that the two truths constitute two distinct entities (*dngos po*). Nor does he mean to suggest that the two truths are one entity seen under two conflicting aspects. First, the basis of the divisions of the two truths is 'mere mind' (*blo tsam*), and it is not coherent to reduce mind into two distinct entities. Second, all entities (*dngos po*) are classified as belonging to

conventional truth, while ultimate truth consists purely of ‘entitlelessness’ (*dnegos med*).

If the two truths are really two distinct entities, then, Go rampa argues, they give rise to a second set of absurdities, also four in number, as set out in the *Saṃdhinirmocana sūtra* as follow:

... if two truths were distinct [entities], then [1] *āryas*, while directly realising ultimate [truth] absurdly would remain unreleased (*mi grol ba*) from the conventional bondage (*kun rdzob kyi 'ching ba*). [2] Reality (*chos nyid*), *nyid*) simultaneously, despite their distinctness, that is, the ultimate [truth] absurdly would not be universal (*spyi tshan nyid*, *sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*) of conventionalities. [3] Either conditioned phenomena (*'du byed*), i.e., conventionalities would remain unestablished or selflessness would absurdly not be ultimate truth. [4] A continuum of each person would absurdly accommodate both, afflictive characteristics (*nyon mongs gyi mtshan nyid*) and liberating qualities (*rnam byang gyi mtshan nyid*).⁷⁷

This second quartet of absurd consequences show, according Go rampa, that the two truths are not utterly distinct *entities* even though they they are distinct and incompatible *perspectives*—perspectives that are in no way convergent. Tsong khapa, however totally disagrees with Go rampa’s interpretation of the passage in the *Saṃdhinirmocana sūtra*. As far as Tsong khapa is concerned, the first four absurdities to which the *Saṃdhinirmocana sūtra* direct attention are intended to operate against the position that treats the two truths as equivalent—as identical in every respect. These absurdities,

as Tsong khapa understands them, expose the problems inherent in any such identification of the two truths. Tsong khapa himself does not explicitly cite the *Samdhinirmocana sūtra*, nor does he exactly spell out these faults, however, many later dGe lugs pa scholars do use the same citation and, just as Go rampa did, they point to the four absurdities as settling the issue concerning the claim that the two truths are equivalent. Consider one example. In mKhen zur Pad ma rGyal tshan's words, we read:

If the two truths [not only have single ontological identity but] a single conceptual identity (*ldog pa gcig yin na*), then [1] common beings (*so skye, prthajana*) would directly realise the ultimate reality (*chos nyid, dharmatā*); [2] the awareness of that reality would generate delusions such as attachment; [3] that [reality] would be comprised of colours, shapes and so forth and [4] yogi's effort to meditate on reality would absurdly be pointless. This would follow because a jar and its ultimate reality (*chos nyid, dharmatā*) would fall under a single conceptual identity.⁷⁸

For Tsong khapa, if the two truths were distinct, then, by definition, they would have distinct ontological identities, since the definitions are founded on those identities.⁷⁹ As mKhas grub rJe points out, "if the two truths are ontologically distinct they must be distinct unrelated things because ontologically distinct things cannot have a 'single-character relationship' (*bdag gcig 'brel*)".⁸⁰ But such a 'single-character' relationship is essential for the unity of the two truths. To reinforce this position, the later dGe lugs pa

scholars also use the *Samdhinirmocana sūtra*.⁸¹ For example, mKhan zur Padma rGyal tshan borrows from the *Samdhinirmocana sūtra* the idea that four absurdities would follow were the two truths entirely distinct:

[1] A jar's emptiness of true existence would not be the jar's mode of existence; [2] the realisation of a jar's emptiness of true existence would not eradicate the reification through the conception of true existence; [3] it would make no sense to say that a jar is the basis of the repudiation of the true existence of the jar and so forth; and [4] the fact that *ārya* buddhas' continuum does not simultaneously accommodate both—the wisdom realising the emptiness and the grasping to true existence of a jar—would become absurd. This would follow if the jar and the jar's emptiness of true existence are distinct.⁸²

Although these four absurdities are here employed to argue against the view that takes the two truths to be utterly distinct, the argument in which they play a part is quite different from that found in Go rampa. Go rampa is not interested in demonstrating the unity between the two truths. His goal is to prove that they constitute two distinct perspectives. On the other hand, Tsongkhapa and the other dGe lugs pa scholars, by drawing attention to these absurdities in the way that they do, aim implicitly at establishing the mutual interdependence of the two truths.

Other Tibetan scholars, kLong chen (1308-1363),⁸³ Rong ston (1367-1449),⁸⁴ Mi pham (1846-1912)⁸⁵ and dGe 'dun Chos 'phel (1903-1951) agree with Go rampa, however, in asserting that the two truths are distinct. They all

argue that the two truths are essentially incompatible with their unity (*gcig pa bkag pa'i tha dad*). In criticising Tsong khapa⁸⁶ for holding that there is a non-contradictory relationship between the two truths, dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, for example, writes:

The so-called mutually compatible relationship between the two truths might be possible if there was ever a time whereby the *ārya's* wisdom and the conception of ordinary beings become mutually compatible without contradiction. Otherwise, such a [relationship] is utterly impossible... There is indeed no opportunity to attain the liberation for those who hold that conventional and ultimate [truths] as non-contradictory. [This also holds true] in terms of the modes of analysis of both the truths.⁸⁷

Also he states:

...This implies the acceptance of the mutually compatible and the non-contradictory relationship between the mental states of the naïve ordinary beings—the lowest extent of foolishness—and the enlightened knowledge—the highest extent of erudition. If by accepting this, it did [justice to the enlightened wisdom], then there should be no problem even in accepting the mutually compatible relationship between the objects of ignorance and reasoning consciousness (i.e., *ārya's* wisdom), [would there?].... In short, the view that holds the two truths as non-contradictory is a philosophical system that accepts all categories of mental states from buddhas down to sentient beings as non-contradictory.⁸⁸

Still others such as Sa paṇ (1182-1251),⁸⁹ Red mda' ba (1349-1412),⁹⁰ Śākya mChog ldan (1428-1507),⁹¹ and Mi skyod rDo rje (1507-1554)⁹² argue that the

relationship between the two truths is essentially 'inexpressible'. They claim that 'ultimately the two truths transcend the notion of identity and difference' (*gcig dang tha dad spros pa dang bral ba*) and 'conventionally, their relationship is neither expressed as identical nor as distinct' (*de nyid dang gzhan du brjod du med*).⁹³

In short, the two accounts we have been considering here differ markedly in their views regarding the relationship between the two truths. Tsong khapa insists that the two truths constitute a single ontological structure and that they share a common ontological identity. Yet he emphatically denies that the two truths are identical in every respect. They are different so far as their mode of appearance and their mode of existence is concerned. The appearance of conventional truth does not cohere with the mode of existence of conventional truth (so conventional truth is contingent and yet gives the appearance of non-contingency), whereas the appearance of ultimate truth is coherent with the mode of existence of ultimate truth (it appears to be non-contingent and is so). Conventional and ultimate truth differ, then, in terms of the two natures upon which they are founded and therefore to the respective cognising consciousnesses to which they relate.

The identity and difference of the two truths must, according to Tsong khapa, be both ontologically and epistemologically grounded in the two natures. This renders the reduction of the two truths to a mere subjective

distinction impossible, since the two natures do not constitute a merely subjective distinction. In contrast, Go rampa's account of the relationship between the two truths takes them to be reducible to two conflicting perspectives. The cognitive experiences of ordinary beings (*so skye, prthajana*) and the cognitive experiences of buddhas are distinct in every sense of the word. There is nothing in common between these two conflicting perspectives and neither is there any common ontological identity nor epistemological link between these two perspectives.

The difference between Tsong khapa and Go rampa's views regarding the relationship between the two truths will become even clearer as we proceed further into the discussion. In the following section, we will compare their views in relation to the authority of the two truths: are there really two truths or is there just one?

3. Two truths or one?

In this section, I will argue that for Tsong khapa the truth is always twofold while for Go rampa the truth is always single. Fundamental to this debate, not surprisingly, is the disagreement between Tsong khapa and Go rampa regarding the basis of the divisions between the two truths. For Tsong khapa, since the two natures of every empirically given phenomenon provide the ontological and epistemological foundation for each of the truths, the division

of truth into two is just right. Both the conventional and the ultimate are actual truths, and since the two natures are mutually interlocking, neither of the two truths has primacy over the other—both stand on an equal footing, ontologically, epistemologically and even soteriologically. For Go rampa, however, ‘truth’ *per se* is not divisible into two. Since ‘mere mind’ provides the basis of the division of the two truths wherein ultimate truth—namely, wisdom—alone is seen as properly satisfying the criterion of truth, so conventional truth—namely, ignorance—cannot properly be taken as truth. Wisdom and ignorance are always contradictory, and thus the two truths cannot coexist. Go rampa argues, in fact, that conventional truth must be eliminated in the ascent to ultimate truth. Given the fact that the wisdom has primacy over ignorance, ‘ultimately’ it is ultimate truth alone that must prevail without its merely conventional counterpart. Ultimate truth is therefore far more significant than conventional truth in all respects—ontologically, epistemologically and soteriologically.

3.1. How is conventional truth ‘truth’ at all?

Let us now return to Tsong khapa. Given the fact that Tsong khapa accepts conventional truths as actual truth and that he argues for an equal status for the two truths, the question that he now must address is: how is conventional truth, which is described as ‘false’ and ‘deceptive’, truth at all? In other

words, how are the two truths of equal status given the fact that conventional truth is 'false' and 'deceptive'? Since Tsong khapa grounds both truths in the dual nature of a single phenomenon, then "just as the ultimate reality (*chos nyid*) of the sprout [for instance] is taken as characteristic (*rang bzhin*) of the sprout, hence it is described as the sprout's nature (*ngo bo*). So too", argues Tsong khapa, "are the sprout's colour, shape etc., the sprout's characteristics (*bdag nyid*). Therefore, they too are its nature (*ngo bo*)".⁹⁴ Since the two natures are ontologically mutually entailing, the sprout's ultimate truth cannot exist without its conventional truth. Likewise, without the conventional truth of the sprout, its ultimate truth cannot exist. In other words, neither truth could exist without the other.

In order to preserve a compatible relationship between the two truths, one of the crucial tasks for Tsong khapa to accomplish is the demonstration of their equal footing. In order to do this, Tsong khapa borrows Nāgārjuna's arguments establishing the unity between the two truths. In the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, particularly in chapter XXIV, Nāgārjuna offers his most explicit statements on the unity between the two truths by advancing two separate arguments, one emphasising the epistemological link, and the other emphasising the ontological unity between the two truths. Both these lines of argument draw upon an understanding of conventional truth as tied to dependent arising and ultimate truth as tied to emptiness.

First, in order to articulate the epistemological link between the two truths, Nāgārjuna states: “without relying upon empirical [truth], the meaning of the ultimate cannot be explained. Without understanding the meaning of the ultimate, nirvāṇa is not attained” [XXIV:10].⁹⁵ Similarly, “to whomsoever emptiness makes sense, everything [the four noble truths] makes sense. To whomsoever emptiness makes no sense, everything make no sense” [XXIV:14].⁹⁶ In the *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, Nāgārjuna puts this point in a slightly different style: “wherever emptiness is possible, there every function is possible. Wherever emptiness is not possible, there every function is not possible” [70].⁹⁷ Second, in order to demonstrate the ontological unity between the two truths, in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* Nāgārjuna writes: “whatever is dependently arisen, is itself explained to be empty. That being dependently designated, is itself the middle path” [XXIV:18].⁹⁸ In the *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, by emphasising the same point, Nāgārjuna pays his homage to the Buddha: “I pay homage to this peerless Buddha, who perfectly explained that the identity of meaning of ‘emptiness’ and ‘dependent arising’ constitutes the middle path” [71].⁹⁹ More explicitly, he argues that “there is no thing that is not dependently arisen; therefore, there is no such a thing that is not empty” [XXIV:19].¹⁰⁰

Candrakīrti also reinforces the unity between the two truths by emphasising the causal efficacy of empty phenomena. “It is not a secret that

empty entities like reflections and so forth depend on aggregation (of causes and conditions), and a consciousness may arise in the form of an image of such an empty reflection for example" [VI:37].¹⁰¹ Moreover he argues that "all entities are, in the similar characteristics, not only are empty [as effects], but they are produced out of empty [causal conditions]".¹⁰² This must follow "because there is no essence whatsoever from the standpoints of both truths": hence all entities, according to Candrakīrti "are neither permanent nor subject to annihilation" [VI:38].¹⁰³

For Tsong khapa, empty phenomenon and dependently arisen phenomenon, as both Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti point out, are synonymous. The concept of emptiness is incoherent unless it is applied to dependently arisen phenomena, and so too, is the concept of dependent arising incoherent unless it is applied to empty phenomena. In the *rTen 'brel stod pa* (*the Praise of Dependently Arisen*), Tsong khapa mobilises his arguments to reinforce the unity between the two truths as follows:

According to you (i.e., the Buddha), since emptiness means 'dependent arising,' the 'emptiness of essence' and the 'efficacy of action and its agent' are not contradictory [11]. If however emptiness is seen as contradictory with [dependent arising], there would be neither action in empty nor empty in action. This way you accept that one falls in a precipice of despair.¹⁰⁴

... Since there is no such phenomenon other than what is dependently arisen, there is no such a phenomenon other than what is empty of essence [14].¹⁰⁵ ... The 'utter nonexistence of essence' and

making sense of everything in the light of the principle 'this arises depending on this,'—there is indeed no need to say that they are non-contradictory [18].¹⁰⁶ ... Therefore, in spite of the fact that whatever is dependently arisen is albeit primordially devoid of essence, it nonetheless appears. [Phenomena] all are thus proclaimed as illusion-like [27].¹⁰⁷

In the *Lam gtso rnam gsum* (*The Three Principal Pathways*), Tsong khapa uses another slightly different argument to establish this unity. "Appearance avoids the extreme of existence, and empty [phenomena] avoids the extreme of nonexistence. Hence by understanding that the empty [phenomenon] itself is the bearer of cause and effect, one is not robbed by the extreme view" [13].¹⁰⁸ As indicated in Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti's arguments the efficacy of empty phenomena, namely, the bearer of cause and effect, is particularly significant to this view. The idea of empty phenomena acting as the basis of cause and effect is crucial in understanding the inextricable relationship between ultimate truth and conventional truth.

Given the fact that empty and dependently arisen phenomena are ontologically united, the knowledge of empty and dependently arisen phenomena are also epistemologically interlinked—the latter is, in fact, founded on the former. To the extent that empty phenomena are understood in terms of relational and dependently arisen phenomena, to that extent empty phenomena are always functional and causally effective. The phrase

'empty phenomena', although expressed negatively, is not negative in a metaphysical sense—i.e. it is not equivalent to 'no-thingness'. Although the empty phenomenon appears to its cognising consciousness negatively, and without any positive affirmation, it is nonetheless equivalent to a relational and dependently arisen phenomenon seen in a different light. Since seeing phenomena as empty does not violate the inevitable epistemological link with the understanding of dependently arisen, and since the understanding of phenomena as dependently arisen does not violate its inevitable epistemological link with seeing phenomena as empty, so the unity between the two truths—between understanding things both as empty and as dependently arisen—is made clear.

Tsong khapa also argues, moreover, that the realisation of phenomena as dependently arisen is the necessary and sufficient condition for the realisation of both the truths. For one cannot realise phenomena as dependently arisen unless one sees phenomena as empty. "So long as the understanding pertaining to empirically consistent appearances—dependently arisen—and the understanding pertaining to the empty [phenomena]—free from all claims—are seen as mutually exclusive," according to Tsong khapa, "the purport of the Buddha is not yet understood" [11].¹⁰⁹ Thus the philosophical inquiry, argues to Tsong khapa, is not complete until one achieves the simultaneous realisations of the two truths.

However the process of philosophical analysis is complete whenever [these two realisations] operate simultaneously without taking alternate turns, and consequently eschew all conceived objects [blindfolding] the discerning wisdom by merely seeing empirically consistent dependently arisen phenomena [12].¹¹⁰

The unity between the two truths, according to Tsong khapa, is not merely applicable to ontological and epistemological issues, it equally applies to soteriological issues. 'Jam dbyangs bZhad pa, one of the more recent (1648-1722) commentators on Tsong khapa's works for example writes:

Undermining either of the two truths would result in a similar downfall, i.e., a similar eventual ruin. If however, they are not undermined, they are alike insofar as the accomplishment of the twofold accumulations (*tshogs gnyis*) and the attainment of the twofold *kāyas* (*skus gnyis*)¹¹¹ etc., are concerned. If one undermines conventional [truth] by denying it, one would succumb to the extreme of nihilism, which would rob the root of virtue, and would consequently migrate in the realm of unfortunates (*ngan 'gro, durgati*). It would also undermine the fruit and the means by which *rūpakāya* is accomplished. It is therefore not sensible to approach the two truths with bias [attitude].¹¹² ...Since this relation continues [as a means to prevent] falling into extremes, thereby being ruined, and also to accomplish the twofold accumulations (*tshogs gnyis, dvi-saṃbhāra*)¹¹³ and the attainment of the twofold *kāyas* (*sku gnyis*), it is imperative that the two truths be understood as mutually inter-related.¹¹⁴

The ultimate soteriological goal for Tsong khapa is to attain the perfect enlightenment, and this attainment, as the above passages explain, depends on the accomplishment of the 'twofold *kāyas*' (*sku gnyis*) of a

buddha—namely, *rūpakāya* (*gzugs sku*), literally 'form body' and *dharmakāya* (*chos sku*), literally 'nature body,' or 'truth body'. The accomplishment of the twofold *kāyas* in turn depends on the comprehension of the unity between the two truths and therefore unity between empty and dependently arisen phenomena. The *rūpakāya* is accomplished as a result of the 'exhaustive accumulation of virtues' (*bsod nams kyi tshogs*, *pūnya sambhāra*) while the *dharmakāya* is as a result of the 'exhaustive accumulation of penetrative wisdom' (*yeshe kyi tshogs*, *jñāna sambhara*). The former emphasises an engagement with the wisdom of dependent arising, while the latter emphasises an engagement with the wisdom of emptiness.

The 'accomplishment of the virtues' emphasises the practical orientations and the need for conventional engagements such as practicing the six-perfections—generosity, morality, forbearance, effort, serenity and wisdom. All these engagements are undertaken in conformity with worldly conventions underpinned by the wisdom of dependent arising. The 'accumulation of penetrative wisdom', on the other hand, emphasises the direct experience of ultimate truth including the direct experience of impermanent, selfless and empty phenomena. This requires the transcendence of worldly conventions by means of achieving the meditative equipoise. The accomplishment of both accumulations, however, culminates

with the purification of defilements and the simultaneous realisation of the two truths, and therefore of emptiness and dependent arising.

Bearing in mind the soteriological unity of the two truths, and therefore of empty and dependently arisen phenomena, Nāgārjuna also remarks: "By virtue of this meritorious deed, may all people accumulate merit and wisdom and attain the two noble fruits (i.e., *rūpakāya* and *dharmakāya*) that arise from merit and wisdom" [60].¹¹⁵ Similarly, the Buddha himself articulates how the two truths are soteriologically intertwined: "Bhikkhus, he who sees suffering sees also the origin of suffering, sees also the cessation of suffering, sees also the way leading to the cessation of suffering" [SN V.437].¹¹⁶ And further it is said: "the knowledge of one who possesses the path is knowledge of suffering and it is knowledge of the origin of suffering and it is knowledge of the cessation of suffering and it is knowledge of the way leading to the cessation of suffering" [Ps I.119].¹¹⁷ Given the fact that the four noble truths are divisions within the two truths,¹¹⁸ and since the four noble truths are soteriologically intertwined, the Buddha clearly points out that the two truths are united even in the soteriological terms. To conclude this section, in rGyal tshab rje's words we can state:

Since the two *kāyas*, viz., *jñāna dharma kāya* (*yeshe chos sku*) and the *saṃbhoga kāya* (*lungs spyod rtogs pa'i sku*) depend on the appropriation of the same actual conditions, they are related. They are also consummated simultaneously at the same time... Therefore, logically it follows that phenomenal basis consists of a unity between the two

truths, the path consists of a unity between the two accumulations, and the result consists of a unity between *dharmakāya* and *rūpakāya*.¹¹⁹

Similarly, Kalupahana puts the unity between the two truths as follows: “*Artha* as well as *paramārtha* are truths (*satya*). The former [conventional truth] is not presented as an un-truth (*a-satya*) in relation to the latter [ultimate truth], as it would be in an absolutistic tradition. Neither is the former sublated by the latter, and further “there is no indication whatsoever that these are two truths with different standing as higher and lower”.¹²⁰ Neither truth is higher or lower than the other, neither is more true or less true than the other, and neither is more significant or less significant than the other.¹²¹ Therefore, Candrakirti states “the doctrines taught by the Buddha are based on the two truths”.¹²² He stresses this point and says, “even if there were another truth whatsoever [apart from the four noble truths], that too would be certainly contained within the categories of the two truths”.¹²³ Tsong khapa agrees.

3.2. Why is conventional truth false and deceptive?

If the two natures are ontologically identical, why is conventional truth described as 'deceptive' and 'false,' while ultimate truth is described as 'non-deceptive' and 'true'? “Non-deceptive” as Tsong khapa argues, “is the mode of truth (*bden tshul*) of the ultimate. That is, ultimate truth does not deceive the world (*'jig rten, loka*) by posing one mode of appearance while existing in

another mode".¹²⁴ Ultimate truth is described as 'ultimate,' not because it is absolute or higher than conventional truth, but simply because of its consistent character—its mode of appearance and its mode of being are the same—in contrast with the inconsistent character of conventional truth. Ultimate truth is non-deceptive for the same reason. Thus Candrakīrti writes, in his commentary on the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*: "[Interlocutor]: why is nirvāṇa said to be the ultimate truth? [Reply]: nirvāṇa is said to be ultimate truth purely based on worldly conventions (*'jig rten gyi tha snyad kho nas*), because its nature (*bdag nyid*) does not deceive the world (*'jig rten, loka*)".¹²⁵

To the cognising consciousness, conventional truth presents itself as inherently existent. It appears as if it has substance, or essence, and therefore it deceives ordinary beings (*byis pa*). "Insofar as conventional phenomena present themselves as more than conventional—as inherently existent—they deceive us. We take them to be what they are not—to be intrinsically identified, inherently existent entities. In that sense, they are false", writes Garfield.¹²⁶ And he continues, "but to the extent that we understand them as dependently arisen, empty, interdependent phenomena, they constitute a conventional truth".¹²⁷ Nāgārjuna also recognises the deceptive nature of conventional truth in this sense: He writes "The Victorious Conqueror has said that whatever is deceptive is false. Compounded phenomena are deceptive. Therefore they are all false" [XIII:1].¹²⁸

So, the rationale behind describing one of the two truths as 'ultimate,' 'non-deceptive' or 'true,' and the other as 'conventional,' 'false' or 'deceptive,' so far as Tsong khapa is concerned, is to contrast the two truths on the basis of the consistency between their mode of appearance and their mode of existence. Since ultimate truth is, by definition, consistent with its mode of appearance, so it does not deceive anyone, not even ordinary beings (*so skye, prthajana*). However, since conventional truth is, by definition, inconsistent with its mode of appearance, so it deceives ordinary beings. It is thus crucial to understand exactly what sense of falsehood is in play when the conventional is characterised as 'deceptive,' as Garfield rightly points out.¹²⁹

Nevertheless, this does not mean that ultimate truth can be considered to be epistemologically more significant than conventional truth. It is true that ordinary beings are deceived by the false and deceptive appearances of conventional truth, but the question is, are they deceived because of their knowledge of conventional truth or are they deceived because they have no proper knowledge of conventional truth? The fact that conventional truth deceives ordinary beings, according to Tsong khapa, demonstrates that they have not yet understood what conventional truth is.

Although ordinary beings experience false and deceptive conventional truth all the time, the inconsistent, and in this sense the false and deceptive nature of conventional truth remains unknown to them. Thus, instead of

knowing such truths for what they are, ordinary beings always grasp them to be essentially real—as if the conventional truth were the ultimate truth.

Garfield explains:

Yet one must bear in mind that, according to Nāgārjuna [and also for Tsong khapa], perception untutored by Mādhyamika philosophy and rigorous practice delivers objects to consciousness as inherently existent. In this sense, the things that we see are wholly false. For most of us, the best that we can do is reason our way into knowing, but not seeing, their true nature. The goal of meditation on emptiness is to bring this knowledge into perceptual experience and, hence, to see things as they are.¹³⁰

Tsong khapa maintains an importance distinction between the knowledge of conventional truth and the ordinary experience of conventional truth. The knowledge of empirically given phenomena as dependently arisen is not treated as equivalent to merely experiencing dependently arisen phenomena. The ordinary being directly experiences conventional truth. Yet Tsong khapa holds that the ordinary being does not have direct understanding of conventional truth. For ordinary beings, seeing physical forms, tasting flavours, smelling aromas, hearing sounds, touching tangible objects and conceiving ideas etc. are in themselves sufficient to form the foundation of conventional knowledge required to lead a pragmatic life. In such circumstances, knowledge of conventional truth is not required, but mere perceptual or conceptual experiences of conventional truth, or even

reification of conventional truths, is enough to provide knowledge acceptable to the mundane norms.

The experiencing of conventional truths by ordinary beings can be likened to an audience held spellbound by a magic show. While the audience consistently experiences illusory animals conjured up by the magician, they may remain ignorant of the illusory nature of those animals, taking them instead, to be real. The illusory nature of the animals thus need not alter the captivating effect of what is presented and experienced, and no knowledge of the reality is necessary for the experience. Similarly, so long as beings are ignorant of conventional truth, and thereby deceived by conventional truth, they are also ignorant of ultimate truth. In such a situation, we lack proper knowledge and understanding of both conventional and ultimate truth—according to Tsong khapa, we have knowledge of neither.

3.3. Applying the worldly convention

Now, if it is true that there are two actual truths, as Tsong khapa proposes, why did the Buddha declare that nirvāṇa is the only truth? The Buddha states: “The truth is one, there is no second about which a person who knows it would argue with one who knows. Contemplatives promote their various personal truths, that is why they do not say one thing and the same” [*Cūḷa-Viyūha Sutta*, Sn IV.12].¹³¹ Also in the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* [35], Candrakīrti raises the

same question: “when the *Jinas* have stated that nirvāṇa alone is true, what learned person will then imagine that the rest is not false. How would you interpret that nirvāṇa alone is true and others are untrue (*mi bden*)”?¹³² The answer to this is question, as far as Tsong khapa is concerned, is well explained in the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti* by Candrakīrti himself:

[Interlocutor]: Well, Bhagvān states: “Oh monks! There is one noble truth. That is, nirvāṇa, which is characteristically non-deceptive”. What do you make of this statement? [Reply]: Insofar as conditioned phenomena (*‘dus byas, saṃskṛta*) deceive the childish (*byis pa*) by presenting false appearances (*log par snang ba*) nirvāṇa is not. For the existence of nirvāṇa is always consistent with its characteristic of the non-arising nature. Unlike conditioned phenomena (*‘dus byas, saṃskṛta*), it never appears, even to the childish (*byis ba*), as having a nature of arising (*skye ba’i ngo bo*). Since, nirvāṇa is always consistent with the mode of existence of nirvāṇa, it is explained as the noble truth (*bden pa dam pa*), yet, strictly in terms of worldly conventions (*‘jig rten gyi tha snyad, lokavyāvahāra*).¹³³

Candrakīrti emphasises that nirvāṇa is said to be the truth strictly in terms of worldly conventions (*‘jig rten gyi tha snyad, lokavyāvahāra*). Let us briefly understand what Candrakīrti meant by explaining nirvāṇa as the noble truth ‘strictly in terms of worldly conventions’ (*‘jig rten gyi tha snyad, lokavyāvahāra*).

Consider this example. In ordinary worldly discourse, it can be asked, are a visual illusion, a mirage, a reflection of a face in a mirror, an echo of sound, an image of the moon in a pool, etc. true? To say that they are not true

would not help here, since it would merely lead on to the further question, why do they exist at all?—the unicorn and the rabbit's horn are also false, yet nowhere do we find them in the way that we find mirages, mirror images and so forth. The real answer must be something like this: *Entities such as illusions, mirages, reflections and so forth are real, but they do not exist the way they appear to us. They all appear to be something other than they really are.* It is the inconsistency between the appearance and the mode of existence that marks these entities as false, and since even the ordinary worldly consciousness understands this inconsistency, so visual illusions, mirages, mirror images and so forth are described as 'false' and 'deceptive' phenomena. Thus, these are descriptions in conventional terms.

On the other hand, what if the question is asked: what is the truth of an actual face, an actual moon, an actual sound, actual water, in contrast with an illusion or reflection? From a commonsensical standpoint, the answer would be that *their truths are such that the appearances and the modes of existence are consistent and, therefore, they are true and non-deceptive.* The non-deceptive nature of a face, a moon, a sound etc. is the ultimate truth pertaining to them from the vantage point of the worldly conventions. Hence, they are described as 'true' or 'real' instead of 'false'.

Candrakīrti and Tsongkhapa recognise this linguistic convention and mobilise exactly the same dialectical styles in the *Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika*

system. Thus the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika's insistence on conformity with the worldly conventions (*'jig rten gyi tha snyad, lokavyāvahāra*) has very significant philosophical implications. Just as an illusion, a mirror image, etc. are real in the ordinary sense, in spite of the fact that they are deceptive and false, so too, conventional phenomena in the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika sense, are real, and can even be said to constitute truths, in spite of the fact that they are recognised by the Mādhyamika themselves as false and deceptive. Similarly, the concept of ultimate truth is also taken from its ordinary application. Nirvāṇa is non-deceptive in the sense that its mode of existence is consistent with its mode of appearance. The non-deceptive nature of the empty phenomenon itself constitutes its truth, and so it is described as 'ultimate' in the Prāsaṅgika system.

These examples, based on worldly conventions, further illustrate that ultimate truth is not superior to conventional truth. As far as Tsong khapa and Candrakīrti are concerned, there is no room for such an interpretation. Let us again return to the examples. Take the example of a reflection of a face in the mirror, for instance, as against the actual face. We might naively assume that because the reflection of a face is not an actual face and does not function as the actual face, it is less important or less significant. But why should we make such assumption? Why not say that the actual face must also be less important or less significant, because it is not the reflection of the face

and therefore it does not function as the reflection of face. The same logic applies both ways. The mere fact that the image is not something other than it is (it is not what it reflects) should not diminish its significance. Understood as a reflection, the mirror image of the face has its own significance and even its own causal effectiveness, just as does the actual face. Moreover, for Tsongkhapa, the causal effectiveness of a thing is precisely what determines its being true. As long as a reflection of face is causally effective, thus empirically functional, even if not necessarily consistent with its appearance, then it is true, in the ordinary sense, in its own right.

Now, let us apply the same concept in the Prāsaṅgika context. If we claim that the conventional characteristics of a sprout such as its colour, shape, extension, size, weight etc. are less important, or less significant, because these characteristics are not identical with the sprout's emptiness, the reverse logic also applies. The ultimate nature of a sprout, i.e., the sprout's empty mode of being, would also be less important or less significant than the sprout's conventional truth. For the sprout's empty mode of being would not be able to function as the sprout's conventional truth. The sprout's empty mode of being would not manifest itself as the sprout's colour, shape, extension, weight and so forth.

It is clear then, neither of the two truths is more or less significant than the other. Indeed, while the illusion only makes sense as illusion in relation to

that which is not illusion, the reflection only makes sense as reflection in relation to that which is reflected. So too does the real only make sense as real in relation to the illusion, the thing reflected in relation to its reflection. This also holds in the case of discussions about the ultimate natures of things—the being of the sprout—only makes sense inasmuch as it holds in discussions of ordinary phenomena. The only criterion that determines a thing's truth in the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka system, represented by Tsong khapa, is the causal effectiveness of the thing as opposed to mere 'heuristic' significance. The sprout's empty mode of being and the sprout's being as appearance are both truths, insofar as they both are causally effective, and thus both functional.

Although the two truths, understood as the empty and the dependently arisen character of phenomena, are of equal footing from the vantage point of Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika, these truths are nevertheless differently described. The sprout's empty mode is always described as 'ultimate truth', while the conventional properties of a sprout such as colour, shape etc are described as 'conventional truths'. The former is accepted as 'non-deceptive truth,' while the sprout's conventional properties are accepted as 'deceptive truth' or 'false truth' in spite of the fact that the conventional properties, here described as deceptive or false truth, are presupposed in commonsensical view as true and real. From the standpoint of *ārya's* meditative equipoise, even what is accepted as empirically real in the ordinary sense is understood as

thoroughly false and deceptive truth. The sprout's conventional properties for example, while having one mode of existence, present themselves to their cognising consciousnesses with the conflicting modes of appearance. The sprout's empty mode, on the other hand, is accepted as a non-deceptive truth from the standpoint of *ārya's* meditative equipoise, for the way it exists and the way it appears to this consciousness are consistent. Nevertheless, for Tsong khapa, following the worldly convention of giving different nomenclatures such as 'true' or 'false' or 'deceptive' or 'non-deceptive,' does not make one true and the other less true. In Garfield's words: "it is important to note that they are introduced as two truths, and that they are introduced as distinct. This will be important to bear in mind... For it is tempting, since one of the truths is characterised as an ultimate truth, to think of the conventional as 'less true'".¹³⁴ Just as ultimate truth is a form of truth, so too is conventional truth—both are truths and hence, for Tsong khapa, there are indeed two truths. Nevertheless given the fact that the two truths are not conceptually or epistemologically identical in all respects, they are rightly described as 'conventional truth' and 'ultimate truth', rather than just 'truth'.

3.4. The one and only truth

Let us now turn to Go rampa. In his view, the two truths are binary opposites. Moreover, for Go rampa, whatever is false and deceptive cannot be

truth—non-deception is thus the mark of truth. With this in mind, Go rampa argues that: “truth, in the end, cannot be divided into two. It therefore makes no sense to enumerate it. Therefore in the *sūtra*, it is said that ‘there is only one noble truth, i.e., a nirvāṇa, which is by nature non-deceptive’”.¹³⁵ Go rampa also cites Nāgārjuna’s statement: “when the *Jinas* have stated that nirvāṇa alone is true, what learned person will then imagine that the rest is not false”?¹³⁶

Go rampa rejects the authority of conventional truth by treating it as a projection of conventional mind—it is the ignorance of ordinary beings. As he writes:

[Question]: If this was true, even the mere term (*tha snyad*) conventional truth (*kun rdzob bden pa, samvṛtisatya*) would be unacceptable, for whatever is a conventional (*kun rdzob*) is incompatible with truth (*bden pa, satya*). [Reply]: Since [conventional] truth is posited only in relation to a conventional mind (*blo kun rdzob*), there is no such a problem. Even so-called true conventionalities (*yang dag kun rdzob ces p’yang*) are posited as truth with respect to conventional mind (*blo kun rdzob*).¹³⁷

This statement is based on the presupposition that conventional truth is not actual truth. So, in the attempt to justify the rationale behind the description of conventional phenomenon as ‘truth’, Go rampa argues that ‘conventional truth’ is simply described to suit the ‘conventional mind’ (*blo kun rdzob*), that is, the ignorant mind of ordinary beings who experience the phenomenal world. In other words, conventional truth is described as ‘truth’ only

inasmuch as it is a truth from the perspective of ignorance. It is a truth projected (*sgro brtag pa*) and taken for granted.

Go rampa equates the ontological significance of conventional truth with 'the appearances of non-existent entities just like illusions'.¹³⁸ As Sa paṇ puts it "conventional truths are like reflections of the moon in the water, despite their nonexistence, they appear due to thoughts".¹³⁹ And Sa paṇ further argues: "the defining characteristic of conventional truth constitutes the appearances of the non-existent objects".¹⁴⁰ In this sense, the conventional truths "are things apprehended by the cognition perceiving empirical entities (i.e., ignorance of ordinary beings). Those very things are found as non-existent by the cognition analysing their mode of existence that is itself posited as the ultimate".¹⁴¹

Most importantly, Go rampa argues that to describe conventional truth as 'truth' has great pedagogical significance in itself. Inasmuch as conventional truth is seen merely as a means to achieve ultimate truth, so Go rampa claims that the Buddha arbitrarily fabricated or described conventional truth as 'truth' simply to suit the mentality of ordinary beings.¹⁴² The two truths are thus categorised as a 'means' (*thabs*) and a 'result' (*thabs byung*). Go rampa argues for the importance of conventional truth, then, as the means to attain the one and only truth that is nirvāṇa.¹⁴³ When conventional truth is provisionally designated as truth, it is contrasted with

ultimate truth by treating the former as ignorant (*rmongs*), or ignorance and the latter as non-ignorant (*ma rmongs*), or wisdom.¹⁴⁴

Given the arguments presented above, it is not surprising to draw the conclusion that, according to the view held by Go rampa, any duality ascribed to truth is entirely untenable. Since there is only one truth, it cannot be distinguished any further. Sa paṇ,¹⁴⁵ kLong chen,¹⁴⁶ Rong ston,¹⁴⁷ Red mda' ba,¹⁴⁸ sTag tsang,¹⁴⁹ Śākya mChog ldan¹⁵⁰ and dGe 'dun Chos 'phel¹⁵¹ all agree with Go rampa that truth itself is not divisible. These scholars also agree that the distinction between the two truths is essentially a distinction between two conflicting perspectives, rather than a distinction within truth. As such Śākya mChog ldan, for example, writes:

Precise enumeration (*grangs nges*) of the twofold truth explained by all earlier Tibetans rests on the precise enumeration of the mistaken cognition (*blo 'khrul*) and unmistaken cognition (*blo ma 'khrul*). With this underpinning reason, they explained the precise enumeration through the elimination of the third alternative. There is not even a single figure to be found who claims the view comparable with the latter [Tibetan scholars, i.e., dGe lugs pas], who assert a precise enumeration of the twofold truth based on the certification of valid cognitions.¹⁵²

Among those who avowedly join Go rampa in claiming that the ultimate truth (i.e., nirvāṇa) is the sole truth and that the phenomenal world is utter illusion are kLong chen,¹⁵³ Śākya mChog ldan,¹⁵⁴ sTag tsang,¹⁵⁵ Mi pham,¹⁵⁶ Mi skyod rDo rje,¹⁵⁷ and dGe 'dun Chos 'phel.¹⁵⁸ Modern scholars such as

Lindtner,¹⁵⁹ Singh,¹⁶⁰ Stcherbatsky¹⁶¹ and Murti¹⁶² also follow the same line of argument. Although all of them are monists about truth, there is a differentiation to be made. Śākya mChog ldan,¹⁶³ and sTag tsang¹⁶⁴ are non-absolute monists. Despite the fact that they maintain that ultimate truth is the sole truth, they do *not* claim it as a *truly established phenomenon* (*bden par grub pa*), one that withstands logical analysis. For example, sTag tsang argues, “nirvāṇa, alone, is accepted as the truth and non-deceptive from the perspective of reasoning consciousness. Even then when it is subjected to analysis not only is nirvāṇa, but if there were anything at all that supersedes nirvāṇa, that should also remain unestablished”.¹⁶⁵ Thus no phenomena, according to sTag tsang, withstands logical analysis. The rest are avowed absolute monists. For example, Mi pham goes to argue with clarity and vigour that the ultimate truth is ‘ultimately established’ (*don dam par grub pa*) and that it withstands logical analysis without being undermined:

Reality (*de bzhin nyid, tathatā*) is truly established (*bden par grub, satya-siddhi*). Conventional phenomena are established as false and deceptive. Ultimate, which is free from [falsity and deception] is established as truth of non-deception and non-falsehood. If this remains unestablished, it would then be impossible to see the *ārya*’s truth (*‘phags pa’i bden pa, ārya satya*). Merely seeing false and deceptive objects like ordinary beings (*tha mal pa*) would never ever free anybody... Whatever is *dharmatā*, i.e., ultimate truth is truly established (*bden grub*), because it is established as cognitive sphere of the nondual wisdom (*gnyis snang med pa’i blo’i yul*). Besides it withstands logical analysis (*rig*

pa'i dpyad bzod pa), for no logical reasoning, whatsoever can undermine (*gzhiḡ cing*) it or causes its destruction (*gcom pa*). Therefore, so long as it does not withstand logical analysis, it is not ultimate, because it would absurdly be conventional.¹⁶⁶

In short, since in his view both truths are actual truths, Tsong khapa is fully committed to a non-paradoxical, mutually entailing, and non-hierarchical relationship between the two truths. In contrast, since ultimate truth is the only truth, Go rampa is committed to a paradoxical, mutually contradictory and hierarchical relationship between the two truths.

Conclusion

The gulf between Tsong khapa and Go rampa's positions regarding the nature of the relationship between the two truths is evident from the outset. Their disagreement on the nature of the distinction between the two truths forms the ground of the debate between them. The key to Tsong khapa's view is his insistence on the 'two natures' (*rang bzhin gnyis*), while for Go rampa, it is the idea of 'mere mind' (*blo tsam*). Tsong khapa attempts to show that the two natures must stand as the foundation of the doctrine of the two truths. On this basis, he is able to argue that the distinction between the two truths is not purely subjective or linguistic in character. Since both the truths have the two natures as their ontological reference, so the distinction between the

truths cannot be reduced to one of mere perspective or even purely epistemological or linguistic practice. In contrast, Go rampa's approach is one that does indeed uphold and reinforce the conception of the two truths as founded in two contradictory perspectives. Consequently, he is able to treat the distinction between the two truths as purely subjective. Since the two truths are not grounded in distinct natures, so the two truths are ultimately reducible to their cognising consciousnesses—ignorance and wisdom.

The gap continues to widen as the analysis focuses on the relationship between the two truths. By arguing that the two truths have a single ontological identity, even though they have different conceptual identities, Tsong khapa shows that they stand on the same ontological footing in spite of the fact that they are verified along separate epistemic pathways. He also insists that they are equally significant in terms of their epistemological and soteriological values. Go rampa, on the other hand, insists that the two truths are distinct and incompatible. In so doing, he not only argues that they are ontologically distinct, but disparages conventional truth as less significant in terms of its epistemological and soteriological value. By treating the two truths as hierarchical, Go rampa holds to a monistic and absolutist view. By treating the two truths as standing on an equal basis, Tsong khapa maintains a pluralistic and a non-absolutistic account and claims that it is indeed consistent with Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika thought.

CHAPTER II

MEANINGS AND DEFINITIONS OF THE TWO TRUTHS

Introduction

This chapter compares Tsong khapa and Go rampa's definitions of the two truths in two parts. The first part offers a detailed analysis of the meaning of the two truths.¹ This includes analyses of several important concepts related to the meaning of *saṃvṛti* (*kun rdzob*), namely, the relationship between *saṃvṛti* and ignorance, *saṃvṛti* and mutual interdependence and *saṃvṛti* and the worldly conventions. These concepts and relations, as we shall see, are critical not only in understanding the defining characteristics of the two truths, but also in clarifying the background to the discussion as well as in addressing the significance of and relationship between the two truths.

Since the meanings and definitions of *saṃvṛti* proposed by Tsong khapa and Go rampa are closely intertwined with the way they understand the scope and the limits of the objects of negation, we shall explore the nature of ignorance in relation to the concealers (*sgrib pa*, *āvaraṇas*). This will be followed by a brief, but nonetheless important, comparison of the meanings of the *paramārthasatya* (*don dam bden pa*). The focus of this analysis will be on

the question of whether the unconditioned and the transcendental nature of the *paramārthasatya* is epistemological or metaphysical.

The second part of this chapter is devoted to a comparative study of the definitions of the two truths offered by Tsong khapa and Go rampa. First, I will compare the criteria they each mobilise to determine the defining characteristics of the two truths. I will argue that for Go rampa, the two contradictory perspectives, viz., ignorance and wisdom, determine his definitions of the two truths, whereas for Tsong khapa, this is determined by the empirically valid consciousness and ultimately valid consciousness. Second, through a comparison of the status of the two truths, Tsong khapa's view that the two truths stand on an equal footing is reinforced. As Tsong khapa understands matters, all empirically given phenomena satisfy the defining characteristics of both truths since they are equivalent to the dual natures verified by their corresponding consciousnesses. I will argue that for Go rampa, in contrast, the defining characteristics of the two truths are mutually excluding and hierarchical.

1. The meanings of *saṃvṛti* (*kun rdzob*)

Let us begin with Candrakīrti's explanation of the meaning of *saṃvṛti*. In the *Prasannapadā*, he attributes three meanings to the term *saṃvṛti*:

Samvṛti (*kun rdzob*) means entirely obstructing. Ignorance is posited as *samvṛti* [concealer] for it veils the true nature of things. Or, *samvṛti* means mutual interdependence; it has the sense of being mutually interdependent. Or, *samvṛti* means 'terms;' it is equivalent with 'worldly convention'. [In this sense], it has the character of expression and expressed, consciousness and objects of consciousness, etc.²

In commenting on Candrakīrti's passage both Tsong khapa and Go rampa offer three explanations (*sgra bshad*) of the term *samvṛti* (*kun rdzob*):³

- 'ignorant consciousness' (*ma rig pa, avidyā*) that conceals the true nature of things either through the conception of essence or through the reification of essence;
- 'mutually interdependent' (*phan tshun brtan pa, paraparasaṃbhavana*); and
- 'worldly conventions' (*'jig rten tha snyad, lokavyavahāra*).

Tsong khapa and Go rampa comment on these three meanings as follows—Tsong khapa first:

[1] *Kun rdzob* (*saṃvṛti*) is nescience or ignorance (*mi shes pa, avidyā* or *ājñāna*) because it conceals ('*gebs*), and thereby obstructs (*sgrib par byed pa*) reality. Since the [Sanskrit] equivalent of the [term] *kun rdzob* (*saṃvṛti*) also applies to the obstruction (*sgrib pa*), it is explained in these terms; this however is far from stating that all *kun rdzob* (*saṃvṛti*) are obstructors. [2] Or, *kun rdzob* (*saṃvṛti*) means mutually interdependent (*phan tshun brten pa, paraparasaṃbhavana*). This means that, since [all phenomena] must be mutually interdependent, it is untrue that they possess self-instituting natures (*tshugs thub kyi rang bzhin pa*). The

reason for this explanation of the term [*kun rdzob*] is also applicable to ultimate truth, yet the term *kun rdzob (saṃvṛti)* does not apply [to ultimate truth, for it is not *kun rdzob*]. For example, the reason for the explanation of the term 'lake-born' [lotus flowers], although, is applicable to frogs [since frogs are born in lakes], but the term 'lake-born' does not apply to them [because they are not lotuses]. [3] Or, *kun rdzob (saṃvṛti)* means—terms (*brda, saṃket*)—i.e., worldly conventions ('*jig rten gyi tha snyad, lokavyavahāra*). That too is explained as having characteristics of expresser and expressed, consciousness and object of consciousness, and so forth. Therefore [*kun rdzob*] must not held to be merely the object possessing conventions (*yul can gyi tha snyad*), consciousness, and expressions.⁴

and then Go rampa:

[1] *Kun rdzob (saṃvṛti)* is that which obstructs all. The primal ignorance (*mi shes pa, ajñāna or avidyā*) is described as *kun rdzob (saṃvṛti)* because ignorance thoroughly conceals the reality of things. [2] Or *kun rdzob (saṃvṛti)* means mutually interdependent (*phan tshun brten pa, parasparsambhavana*). It means [that things] are mutually interdependent. [3] Or, *kun rdzob (saṃvṛti)* refers to terms (*rda, saṃket*), i.e., worldly conventions ('*ig rten gyi tha snyad, lokavyavahāra*). That too is explained as having the characteristics of expresser and expressed, consciousness and objects of consciousness, and so forth.⁵

In reference to the three meanings, Tsong khapa and Go rampa point out that these are sets of connotations or implications that the word *saṃvṛti (kun rdzob)* may bear in various contexts. In the following three sections, we shall briefly

consider the epistemological, ontological and soteriological significance of each of these three meanings in turn.

1.1. *Samvṛti* as 'ignorant consciousness'

In the first meaning of *samvṛti*, the debate between Tsong khapa and Go rampa centres primarily on the scope of ignorance and its implications for the system of conventional truths (*saṃvṛtisatya, kun rdzob bden pa*). Tsong khapa argues that essences reified by ignorant consciousness are strictly epistemological since they are purely conceptual reifications. Empirically, essences are nonexistent and, strictly speaking, do not have any ontological foundation. In spite of the fact that the reifying agents themselves (ordinary beings) cling to essences as realities or truths, those essences do not constitute empirical truths. The eradication of ignorance thus leads to the eradication of conceptually reified essences, but not to the eradication of empirical truths themselves. Go rampa, on the other hand, argues that empirical truths are themselves essences reified by ignorance and as a consequence he also denies that there are any so-called 'conceptually reified' essences apart from what are empirically given. The eradication of ignorance, according to this view, leads to the eradication of empirical truth.

In the context in which *saṃvṛti* refers to ignorant consciousness (*ma rig pa, avidyā*), both Tsong khapa and Go rampa maintain that *saṃvṛti* (*kun rdzob*)

has the connotation of what Newland⁶ calls a 'concealer,' for it specifically refers to a consciousness that conceals the true identities of phenomena. Phenomena, for both Tsong khapa and Go rampa, are devoid of essences and are essentially empty of any substantial mode of being. Due to ignorance, however, as Tsong khapa and Go rampa explain it, ordinary beings conceptually reify or superimpose (*sgro 'dogs pa*) onto phenomena the idea of their having an essential mode of existence. Tsong khapa and Go rampa also agree that ignorance compels ordinary beings to unconsciously apply conceptually distorted identities to phenomena and to confuse them with true identities. Since ignorance conceals the truth from being directly perceived, it is described as a 'concealer' (*saṃvṛti, kun rdzob*).⁷ Ignorance is also described as an 'obscuring consciousness' (*rmongs par byed*), inasmuch as it literally obstructs sentient beings from seeing things as they really are. Go rampa, for example, argues as follows:

In the first [etymological explanation of] *saṃvṛtisatya*, *saṃ* is [an abbreviated form] of *samyag*, meaning 'reality', and *vṛti* means 'to conceal'. Since it conceals true meaning of reality (*yang dag pa'i don*), ignorance—the conception of true existence—is a model of *kun rdzob* (*saṃvṛti*) regardless of the difference between reified objects (*kun brtag pa*) and intuitive assumptions (*lhan skes*). For it 'conceals true meaning of reality'. *Satya* (*bden pa*) means 'truth'. It is truth in the sense that it appears true from the perspective of the ignorant consciousness.⁸

The agreement between Tsong khapa and Go rampa regarding their treatments of ignorance does not, however, go far. Unlike Tsong khapa, Go rampa goes on to argue that *saṃvṛti*, namely ignorance (*ma rig pa, ajñāna*), is responsible for reifying *saṃvṛtisatya* (*kun rdzob bden pa*), that is, for reifying the whole system of empirical truths (*tha snyad bden pa, vyāvahārikasatya*). Indeed, according to Go rampa's view, there is no cognitive process that does not reify *saṃvṛtisatya* (*kun rdzob bden pa*) at the same time as it verifies *saṃvṛtisatya* (*kun rdzob bden pa*). Every cognitive event, either perceptual or conceptual reifies or conceives essence and therefore reifies or conceives all cognitions and the cognised objects classified as the 'objects of negation' (*dgag bya*). Every cognition thus operates under the influence of ignorance.

'The objects of negation', according to Go rampa, are of two types—the 'soteriological objects of negation' (*lam gyi dgag bya*) and the 'epistemological objects of negation' (*rig pa'i dgag bya*). We shall leave the details of the 'soteriological objects of negation' for consideration later. In the current context, what is most relevant to address is the exact scope of the 'epistemological objects of negation' in Go rampa's account. In the following passage Go rampa clearly asserts that all subjects and objects, and thus all conventional truths, belong to the 'epistemological objects of negation'.

The soteriological object of negation (*lam gyi dgag bya*) is constitutive of all deceptive appearances. The epistemological (*rigs pa*) and the scriptural (*lung*) objects of negation (*dgag bya*)... are comprised of

apprehended objects and apprehending subjects. The former [apprehended objects], includes two types [of objects of negation]: that which is grossly reified through philosophical misconception and that which is reified by virtue of innate misconception....The latter, the subjective object of negation comprised of all cognitions and distorted views—including concepts such as 'this object' and 'that object'.⁹

Tsong khapa also distinguishes between the 'soteriological objects of negation' and the 'epistemological objects of negation'. However, for Tsong khapa, the epistemological objects of negation consist of 'the conception of essence' and of 'essence *per se*'.¹⁰ Of the two, Tsong khapa sees the latter as fundamental, since the eradication of reified essence leads to the eradication of the consciousness that conceives or reifies essence. The erroneous conception of essence does not arise if its conceptual object, i.e. essence, is negated. The cognising subject depends on its object to exist, since the existence of both subject and object is one of mutual interdependence.¹¹ In direct contrast with Go rampa's view (wherein empirical truths themselves are considered as the epistemological objects of negation), Tsong khapa argues that "whatever is [the epistemological] object of negation must have no empirical existence. For something that exists empirically cannot be repudiated by way of conceptual analysis".¹² This does not mean that the repudiation of the epistemological objects of negation is a futile exercise. Despite the nonexistence of essence *per se*, argues Tsong khapa, "the

misconceptions pertaining to the existence of essence still arise. This has to be repudiated".¹³

Given the more restricted scope of the first sense of *saṃvṛti*, Tsongkhapa, equates it with ignorance and maintains that whatever is reified by ignorance must be included among the epistemological objects of negation. It is thus crucial to note that, in this context, the term *saṃvṛti* should not be understood in its usual sense. The scope of *saṃvṛti* (*kun rdzob*) does not, therefore, include subjects and objects in any broad sense. Go rampa, on the other hand, argues that the first sense of *saṃvṛti* must include all conventional phenomena. He borrows this argument from his Indian predecessor Jayānanda [12th Century]. Jayānanda treats the entire system of *saṃvṛtisatya* as a reification of ignorance. In his commentary on the *Madhayamakāvatāra*, Jayānanda distinguishes between the two types of concealers (*sgrib pa, āvaraṇas*)—namely, deluded ignorance (*nyon mongs can gyi ma rig pa, kleśājñāna*) and non-deluded ignorance (*nyon mongs can ma yin pa'i ma rig pa, akleśājñāna*)—the former is seen as responsible for causing the recurrence of saṃsāric life while the latter is seen as responsible for causing the appearance of the conventional world.¹⁴ The appearance of the conventional world, according to Jayānanda, is therefore due to non-deluded ignorance. Go rampa could not agree more.

Tsong khapa however considers the view held by Jayānanda, and therefore of Go rampa, to be extremely problematic, at least so far as the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika is concerned. From Tsong khapa's perspective, to identify ignorance as *saṃvṛti* "amounts to identifying *saṃvṛti* in terms of a perspective to which *saṃvṛti* is being referred, but this does not amount to identifying *saṃvṛti* in a general sense".¹⁵ To describe *saṃvṛti* or ignorance as a concealer because it obstructs seeing reality as it is, is for Tsong khapa "far from claiming that all *saṃvṛti* are concealers".¹⁶ It is acceptable for the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika to maintain that all phenomena are *saṃvṛti*, that is, conventionalities, and yet it is not acceptable to maintain that all phenomena are *saṃvṛti*, that is, concealers of reality. Hence 'concealer of reality', in the case of Tsong khapa, specifically refers to ignorant consciousness, but not to phenomenal objects and sense perceptions.

Tsong khapa does acknowledge, however, that *saṃvṛti* has another dimension. When the *saṃvṛti*—ignorance as a concealer of reality—is understood in conjunction with the term *satya* (*bden pa*), then the two terms can be combined to form *saṃvṛtisatya* (*kun rdzob bden pa*)—literally 'truth for a concealer'. In this context, *satya* should be taken as the object of consciousness, while *saṃvṛti* refers to the deluded consciousness itself. This very specific "*saṃvṛtisatya*", according to Tsong khapa, "is posited entirely by the power of a deluded ignorance".¹⁷ In fact, this particular *satya*, as we shall

see shortly, is said to be entirely fabricated by the deluded consciousness. It has no empirical objectivity whatsoever.

The question then is: what is the ontological status of the *satya*, i.e., the truth reified by this *saṃvṛti* (deluded ignorance)? How is this particular truth as reified by ignorance different from other empirically given truths? Since Go rampa treats conceptually reified truth and empirically given truth as one and the same, these questions do not arise. But for Tsong khapa the issue is totally different. Since he insists on the radical distinction of conceptually reified truth from empirically given truth, Tsong khapa's responses to the above questions are crucial:

Under the influence of this *kun rdzob*, the conception of true existence (*bden 'dzin*)—things such as blue colours appear to have essential existence, while in fact they have no essence whatsoever. False constructions (*bcos ma*) fabricated (*bcos pa*) [by the ignorance] appear so real (*bden par snang*) to sentient beings that they are described by the Victor (*thub pa, muni*) as 'jig rten gyi kun rdzob kyi bden pa [truths for worldly beings], i.e., they are real [only] from the perspective of erroneous consciousness of ordinary beings, ('jig rten gyi phin ci log kyi kun rdzob).¹⁸

Satya, truth reified by ignorance, entails, in Tsong khapa's view, reified essence and the conception of essence. Essence fabricated by ignorance, which is truth or reality for deluded consciousness, is nevertheless utterly rejected by Mādhyamika thought. In fact, Tsong khapa argues that it is one of

the distinctive features of Prāsaṅgika (as opposed to Svātantrika) to proclaim that things do not have essences even conventionally. Although essence is recognised as the truth by ordinary people, and thus it is described as *'jig rten gyi kun rdzob kyi bden pa*, a truth for ordinary beings or truth for-a-concealer, it is nonetheless, utterly nonexistent for the Prāsaṅgikas.

From the Prāsaṅgika standpoint “essence...is not a conventional truth (*kun rdzob kyi bden pa, saṃvṛtisatya*)”.¹⁹ Far from it being empirical truth, Tsong khapa insists that “anything that is posited by the reifying cognition (*bden 'dzin*) is not even conventionally possible”.²⁰ For while essence is reified by ignorance, it is empirically nonexistent. Essence (*svabhāva*) superimposed or conceived through ignorance (*saṃvṛti, kun rdzob*) must not therefore have any empirical grounding (*tha snyad du 'ang mi srid*). For something to be qualified as a *saṃvṛtisatya* (*kun rdzob kyi bden pa yin na*), Tsong khapa claims that “it must inevitably satisfy an empirical position”.²¹ All Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas are unanimous in asserting that “it is impossible for things to be essentially existent in and of themselves. This is precisely because, apart from the reifying cognition, no other non-reifying consciousness such as perception verifies the existence of essence. This shows”, Tsong khapa concludes, “that essence is purely subjective (*blo ngor*)”.²² Kalupahana also points out that “the notion of a substance was rejected because it could not be identified with anything in experience”.²³ Therefore, reified essence and the conception of

essence, according Tsong khapa, constitute the central epistemological objects of negation. It is thus clear that the distinction between the description of phenomena as *saṃvṛti* (*kun rdzob*), and the description of ignorance (understood as a reifying perspective) as *saṃvṛti* plays such a crucial role in Tsong khapa's account.

The next question at issue here is this: what is the impact of eradicating ignorance and its reified essence and so of eradicating the epistemological objects of negation? This question concerns both Tsong khapa and Go rampa and their responses are radically different, reflecting their contrasting positions regarding the scope of ignorance and its reified essence, and so the scope of the epistemological objects of negation. There is, however, one thing upon which they agree, although the agreement is somewhat superficial. Both Tsong khapa and Go rampa maintain that all phenomena conceived as essentially real by ordinary sentient beings under the spell of ignorance are understood by those who have eradicated deluded ignorance (*nyon mongs pa can gyi ma rig pa*) as conditioned, false and deceptive. The essences fabricated by ignorance can only deceive immature beings (*byis pa*), but such reified truths cannot deceive enlightened beings such as *ārya-śrāvakas*, *ārya-pratyekabuddhas* and *ārya-bodhisattvas*. Hence, Tsong khapa, for example, argues that "since those beings no longer presuppose the existence of such essences, they see all phenomena as essentially unreal".²⁴ All conventional

phenomena are “mere *saṃvṛti* (*kun rdzob tsam*), just like illusions, and they are perceived as dependently arisen”.²⁵ Go rampa agrees.

In spite of the fact that *ārya-śrāvakas*, *ārya-pratyekabuddhas* and *ārya-bodhisattvas* are free from *saṃvṛti*—ignorance and its reified *essence*—their empirically valid cognitions consistently verify *saṃvṛtisatya*, conventional truths.²⁶ This means that although *ārya* understand all conditioned phenomena (*saṃskāra*, ‘*du ‘byed rnams*) as untrue (*me bden pa*), they do not reduce “conventional phenomena to non-conventional truths of some kind (*kun rdzob bden par ma yin par ma bsgrubs*)”.²⁷ And those conventional truths are not concealers whether they relate to subjective consciousness or to the object of that consciousness. In contrast, for Go rampa, whether we look to subjective consciousness (*yul can*) or objective phenomena, then so long as these are *saṃvṛti*, so long are they responsible for concealing the truth. Both subjective consciousnesses and the objects of consciousnesses are, according to this view, concealers of reality.²⁸ “Objective appearances of the conditioned phenomena perceived by three types of *āryas* in their post meditative equipoise”, as Go rampa argues, “are also concealers of reality (*yang dag sgrib byed*). For [those appearances] arise due to the power of the impressions or the apprehensions of duality”.²⁹ Moreover, Go rampa also claims that objective appearances obstruct the development of the meditative equipoise that transcends the apprehension of appearances.³⁰

While Tsong khapa argues that empirical truths are not posited by ignorance, but instead are certified by empirically valid consciousnesses, Go rampa takes empirical truths to be wholly posited by ignorance. Go rampa borrows this position from Jayānanda. When Jayānanda was asked by his interlocutors, “but why are illusory objects like dependently arisen phenomena apparent, even after the eradication of deluded ignorance (*nyon mongs pa can gyi ma rig pa*)? It is due to the operation of mere ignorance that conceals true knowledge (*shes bya'i sgrib pa, jñeyāvaraṇa*),” replies Jayānanda.³¹ Go rampa fully agrees.

1.2. *Samvṛti* as ‘mutually interdependent’

The second sense of *saṃvṛti* is ‘mutually interdependent’ (*phan tshun brten pa, parsparasambhavana*). For Tsong khapa, this represents a radical contrast with the first meaning of *saṃvṛti* wherein *saṃvṛti* is equated with ignorance. *Samvṛti*, in this context is taken to refer to the mutually interdependent nature of the two truths both epistemologically and ontologically. I will argue that, for Tsong khapa, even *paramārthasatya*, ultimate truth, let alone all empirically given truths, should be classified as categories of *saṃvṛti* whenever *saṃvṛti* takes ‘mutually interdependent’ as its sense. I will argue that, for Go rampa, in contrast, the second meaning of *saṃvṛti*, namely, ‘mutually interdependent’, while it does apply to empirical truth in both an ontological

and epistemological sense, cannot apply to ultimate truth. For Go rampa ultimate truth is ontologically transcendent and absolute and cannot be *sarivṛti* at any level.

Let us turn to Tsong khapa first. If the term *sarivṛti* is taken to mean ‘mutually interdependent’, as opposed to meaning ‘ignorance’, then, Tsong khapa argues, *sarivṛti* must apply exhaustively to *all* phenomena including ultimate truth. What is at issue here does not merely concern the relation between phenomena and the apprehending consciousness, but rather the core ontological status of *all* phenomena. With respect to empirical or conventional truth, mutual interdependence implies ontological insubstantiality, essenceless and evanescence. In other words, being ‘mutually interdependent’ means that the very existence of all phenomena depends on their being relational and interdependent—“As all phenomena must arise through a network of their causes and conditions, they simply are empty of the self-defining characteristics”.³²

‘Mutual interdependence,’ according to the view held by Tsong khapa, is not restricted to empirical truths alone. Indeed, Tsong khapa argues that the term *sarivṛti*, in the sense of ‘mutually interdependent’, refers also to the ontological and epistemological interdependence of ultimate truth (*paramārthasatya don dam bden pa*) in relation to conventional truth. The mode of the existence of ultimate truth is entirely dependent on its conventional

counterpart. The two are like subject and predicate in that the latter cannot exist without the former and the vice versa. In this sense, ultimate truth can be said to belong to the categories of *saṃvṛti* (*kun rdzob*). Consequently, *paramārthasatya*, ultimate truth, is considered as a category of *saṃvṛti* not because it fulfils the defining criterion of *saṃvṛti*, but because it is ontologically and epistemologically interdependent with conventional truth.

The idea of classifying ultimate truth as *saṃvṛti* is not sustainable, argues Tsong khapa, if ultimate truth is given primacy or priority over conventional truth—whether ontological or epistemological. Since he himself views *paramārthasatya* and *saṃvṛtisatya* as standing on an equal footing, so neither of the two can have priority over the other. *Paramārthasatya* is the ultimate nature, or ultimate mode, of the empirically given truths.³³ Since the ultimate truth is not possible without a characterised empirical object, *paramārthasatya* is not possible unless it is a dependently arisen phenomenon. Indeed, ultimate truth is none other than the ultimate mode of being of empirical truth. If *paramārthasatya* were not a dependently arisen phenomenon, then it would then be ontologically absolute, and therefore essentially real, but in that case, *paramārthasatya* would neither be equivalent to empty phenomenon nor would it be feasible to categorise it as *saṃvṛti*—as a mutually interdependent phenomenon.

Go rampa agrees with Tsong khapa in recognising empirical phenomena as mutually interdependent phenomena, and as being dependently arisen and contingent. Go rampa explains *sa m* as meaning 'interdependent' (*brten pa*) or 'relative' (*ltos pa*) and *vr̥ti* as 'engaging' (*'jug pa*).³⁴ The first two of these, 'interdependent' and 'relative', reflect the idea of ontological interdependence, while the third, 'engaging', reflects the idea of epistemological interdependence. The point of contrast for Go rampa, however, is that all interdependent phenomena, namely, all conventional and thus empirically given truths, are themselves the effects of ignorance—all empirically given truths arise as the result of ignorance. Although he takes *samvr̥ti* to mean 'mutually interdependent', Go rampa emphasises dependence of object on subject and hence relativity to the subject. According to this view, the phenomenal world is ontologically dependent on the subject that cognises. Moreover, like Jayānanda, Go rampa claims that the whole system of empirical truths (*tha snyad bden pa*, *vyāvahārikasatya*) is causally dependent on ignorance. It is ignorance, he argues, that causally projects all empirical truths (*tha snyad bden pa*, *vyāvahārikasatya*) either "through the impressions of primordial ignorance which conceives true existence" or "due to familiarity with flawed philosophical systems".³⁵

So far as interdependence is concerned, Go rampa sees conventional and ultimate truth as radically distinct—indeed, Go rampa does not view ultimate

truth as ontologically dependent or interdependent at all. Firstly, ultimate truth is not projected by primal ignorance, for it is the only non-deceptive truth. Secondly, ultimate truth has ontological primacy over empirical truth. It is, in other words, ontologically distinct and stands higher than empirical truth. Ultimate truth is ontologically free from the imperfections of empirical truths such as being conditioned, false, and deceptive and thus, ultimate truth is not interdependent. It is ontologically transcendent and absolute. Hence, according to Go rampa, ultimate truth cannot in any circumstance be a category of *samvṛti*. In endorsing Go rampa's view, Murti states "[*samvṛti*] may also mean the mutual dependence of things—their relativity. In this sense it is equated with phenomena, and is in direct contrast with the absolute which is by itself, unrelated".³⁶ Similarly, Jaideva Singh states: "the Absolute comprehended through the categories of thought is phenomena and phenomena stripped of these categories are the Absolute".³⁷

There is yet another important distinction to be made between Tsongkhapa, on one hand, and Go rampa on the other. As far as the former is concerned, ontological interdependence *per se* is precisely the *paramārthasatya*, ultimate nature of all phenomena. There is no *paramārthasatya* of phenomena apart from them being dependently arisen. To know phenomena as dependently arisen is tantamount to knowing ultimate truth. In contrast, Go rampa argues that dependent arising is incompatible with ultimate truth. The

perception of phenomena as dependently arisen operates only under the spell of *ignorance*, whether deluded and non-deluded. Dependently arisen phenomena are ultimately reducible to the effects of ignorant consciousness, and hence cannot be the ultimate truth of any other phenomena.

1.3. *Samvṛti* as ‘worldly conventions’

The third meaning of *saṃvṛti* (*kun rdzob*) is ‘worldly convention’ (*‘jig rten gyi tha snyad, lokavyavahāra*). This sense of *saṃvṛti*, according to Tsong khapa, takes into account the terms and the consciousnesses and their objective referents. As Candrakīrti puts it, *saṃvṛti* as worldly convention “has the characteristics of expression and expressed object, consciousness and object of consciousness, and so forth”.³⁸ As opposed to the first meaning of *saṃvṛti*, where *saṃvṛti* is specifically equated with the reifying ignorant consciousness, in the third sense of *saṃvṛti*, Tsong khapa argues that *saṃvṛti* “must not be held to be merely subjective conventionalities (*yul can gyi tha snyad*)—consciousness and expressions”.³⁹ The third sense of *saṃvṛti*, namely, ‘worldly convention’ (*‘jig rten pa’i tha snyad, lokavyavahāra*) or ‘terms’ (*brda, saṅket, samay*) applies and takes into account all cognitive resources, namely the six senses—eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and intellect—their six corresponding objects—form, sound, aroma, taste, tactile objects and ideas—and also the six consciousnesses—visual consciousness, auditory

consciousness etc.—that arise from the contact between the six senses and the six objects.

Go rampa agrees with Tsong khapa regarding the third meaning of *saṃvṛti*. Go rampa explains that *saṃ* refers to *saṅket (brda)*, meaning, 'terms', or 'expressions', while *vṛti* refers 'to posit'. *Samvṛti* therefore refers to conventionalities posited by terms or expressions.⁴⁰ The second and the third meanings of *saṃvṛti*—mutually interdependent and worldly conventions respectively, are closely tied to the first meaning of *saṃvṛti*. The whole system of 'worldly conventions'—including cognising consciousness, cognised objects, terms and their referents, processes, events etc.—are said to be the effects of ignorance, the first sense of *saṃvṛti*. Without ignorance, that is, without the first meaning of *saṃvṛti*, neither the second meaning of *saṃvṛti* as 'mutually interdependent' nor the third meaning as 'worldly conventions' would make any sense. Only in the presence of ignorance, which literally gives rise to worldly conventions and to the interdependent empirical phenomena would either of these be able to arise or to be understood. Go rampa also argues that *saṃvṛtisatya* is so described because it is true only from the vantage point of the ignorant consciousness. This is why in Go rampa's view, the first sense of *saṃvṛti* is fundamental, and overrides the significances of the two other senses of *saṃvṛti*. According to Go rampa, then, conventional phenomena are true only with respect to the deluded cognitive perspective

associated with ignorance. It is in this sense that objects are “conventional truths (*saṃvṛtisatya*, *kun rdzob bden pa*), and are considered referents of linguistic conventions (*brda ’jug pa’i gzhi*)”.⁴¹

This discussion of Tsong khapa and Go rampa’s analyses of the meanings of *saṃvṛti* can now be brought to a conclusion with some brief reflections on their respective readings of one of the most crucial verses relating to the issue at stake here to be found in the *Madhyamakāvatāra* of Candrakīrti:

Because ignorance conceals the true nature, it is (1) *saṃvṛti*.

It conceives all conditioned phenomena (*bcos ma*) as real.

Thus, they are declared by [Śākya]mūni as (2) *saṃvṛtisatya*.

All conditioned things (*bcos mar gyur ba*) are (3) *saṃvṛti* [VI: 28].⁴²

In this verse Candrakīrti repeats the term *saṃvṛti* three times and in each occasion we can see Tsong khapa and Go rampa as interpreting Candrakīrti’s words in contrasting ways. Tsong khapa maintains that there is a significant difference between the meaning of the first use of the term *saṃvṛti* and the latter two uses, arguing that these uses “should not be taken as identical”.⁴³ The first use of *saṃvṛti*, he claims, refers to subjective consciousness, qua ignorance, as a concealer. Ignorance, Tsong khapa holds, “is a *saṃvṛti*, because, it is a reifying cognition, which superimposes essential existence onto [contingent phenomena] by concealing the true mode of existence from being seen [by sentient beings]”.⁴⁴ As was pointed out earlier, when *saṃvṛti* is

understood with reference to *saṃvṛtisatya*, meaning literally 'a truth-for-a-concealer', the idea is, as Tsong khapa puts it, "to identify [a specific] *saṃvṛti*, i.e., a perspective to which the *saṃvṛti* is being referred. However, strictly speaking, this [identification] does not amount to identifying *saṃvṛti* in a general sense".⁴⁵ According to Tsong khapa, *saṃvṛti*, in this context, specifically refers an erroneous or a reifying cognition. Hence, the first sense of "*saṃvṛti* employed by Candrakīrti refers to a concealer (*sgrib byed*), whereby the concealer is taken as meaning the same (*skad dod*) as *saṃvṛti*".⁴⁶

The second meaning of *saṃvṛti* has two senses: it refers to 'essence' as it is conceptually reified by the ignorant consciousness, which, as Tsong khapa argues, is empirically nonexistent. It can also refer to the empirical phenomena that act as the basis for the reification process, for example, to the table that is itself reified as an essential phenomenon. The third *saṃvṛti*, so far as Tsong khapa is concerned, refers to all conventionalities in a much broader sense. All conditioned phenomena or dependently arisen phenomena, including ignorance itself as well as the conception of essence, come under the third category of *saṃvṛti*. However, not all conventionalities (*kun rdzobs, saṃvṛti*) satisfy the criterion of being conventional truth (*kun rdzob bden pa, saṃvṛtisatya*). As Tsong khapa argues, "if something is a conventional truth, it must necessarily meet the criterion of empirical existence (*tha snyad du yod pa*)".⁴⁷ Ignorance and all other dependently arising phenomena are

conventional truths and are grounded in empirical evidence. While the essence projected by ignorance constitutes a conventional truth for ordinary beings, essence is not a conventional truth from the Madhyamika standpoint. It does not meet the criterion of empirical truth. “It is thus unfounded even empirically”.⁴⁸ Therefore, as Candrakirti puts it “[essence] and other things that are understood to be false even conventionally [e.g. the reflection of face being an actual face, mirage being water etc.,] are not considered as categories of conventional truths”.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, they are considered as categories of conventionalities (*saṃvṛti*, *kun rdzob*).

Unlike Tsong khapa, who has a more nuanced account of the term *saṃvṛti* as it appears in verse VI:28 of the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, Go rampa’s reading of this verse is a quite straightforward one. He takes the first sense of *saṃvṛti* to be synonymous with ignorance itself and the latter two senses *saṃvṛti(s)* to be synonymous with the objects found or reified by such ignorance. In this respect, objects themselves are the essences and there is no essence apart from what is empirically given. Dependently arisen phenomena, therefore, are the categories of objects that are projected by ignorance. The explanations of *saṃvṛti* by kLong chen,⁵⁰ Sa paṇ,⁵¹ Śākya mChog ldan,⁵² Rong ston,⁵³ and Murti⁵⁴ largely accord with Go rampa’s interpretation. All of them treat primal ignorance as the villain responsible for projecting the entire system of conventional truths. As a consequence, they

also agree that the senses of *saṃvṛti* as conventional and as interdependent are entirely dependent upon the first meaning of *saṃvṛti* as ignorance.

2. Concealers: the ‘soteriological objects of negation’

The scope and role of ignorance is a central issue in any exploration of the three meanings of *saṃvṛti* and since, in order fully to comprehend the meanings of *saṃvṛti*, it is crucial to grasp the scope of the *negative* impact of ignorance, we shall also briefly consider Tsong khapa and Go rampa’s views on the ‘soteriological objects of negation’ (*lam gyi dgag bya*)—the *āvaraṇas* (*sgrib pa*) rendered as ‘concealers’, or ‘obstructions’.

Both Tsong khapa and Go rampa maintain that it is the presence of the soteriological objects of negation—namely, the two types of concealers (*sgrib pa*, *āvaraṇas*)—that is responsible for preventing sentient beings from attaining correct knowledge and so from attaining enlightenment. The concealers comprise so-called ‘deluded concealers’ (*mnyon sgrib*, *kleśāvaraṇas*) and ‘non-deluded concealers’ (*akleśāvaraṇa*, *nyon rmongs can ma yin pa’i sgrib pa*). The non-deluded concealers are also called the ‘concealers of true knowledge’ (*shes bya’i sgrib pa*, *jñeyāvaraṇa*). These two concealers are said to be obstructions responsible for obscuring the true nature of reality. They thus prevent cognising beings from knowing phenomena as they actually are. The deluded concealers (*nyon sgrib*, *kleśāvaraṇas*) comprise three main elements:

craving, aversion, and ignorance. Among them, the last, deluded ignorance (*akleṣṭāvaraṇa*, *nyon mongs can gyi ma rig pa*) plays the chief role in concealing reality through actively reifying essences (*rang bzhin*, *svabhāva*) or passively conceiving them (and sometime both in combination). Either way, the deluded concealers are those reifying cognitive processes responsible for distorting the ultimate truth pertaining to processes, events and phenomena.⁵⁵ The non-deluded concealers—concealers of true knowledge (*shes bya'i sgrib pa*, *jñeyāvaraṇa*)—are comprised of predispositions or impressions left in our mind by the deluded concealers (*nyon sgrib*, *kleśāvaraṇas*).

For both Tsong khapa and Go rampa, the concealers of true knowledge (*shes bya'i sgrib pa*, *jñeyāvaraṇa*) are subtle mental conditionings that predispose cognising beings to the influence of deluded ignorance or reifying mental processes.⁵⁶ These subtle mental conditionings, unlike the reifying ignorance itself, do not themselves bring about the active reification of essences, but are instead passive dispositions that may persist even after the total eradication of the deluded concealers. Just as the smell of the onion remains even after the onion itself has been removed, so the concealers of true knowledge remain after the removal of the deluded concealers—and just as it is much easier to remove the onion than its smell, so it is easier to remove the deluded concealer than the non-deluded.

Why are non-deluded concealers taken to constitute ignorance? In Tsong khapa's case, it is to the extent that they obscure subtle realities from direct perception—thus they prevent an *ārya* from grasping empty phenomena as empty or dependently arisen phenomena as dependently arisen. The non-deluded concealers thus constitute a form of ignorance even though they arise after the obliteration of deluded ignorance. For Go rampa, however, the distinction between deluded and non-deluded concealers is understood very differently. Go rampa borrows Jayānanda's account according to which the types of ignorance are derived from different functions: "Ignorance is twofold, deluded and non-deluded. Deluded ignorance causes saṃsāra by generating clinging towards 'I' and 'Mine,' whereas non-deluded ignorance merely causes the appearances of physical forms and so forth. But it is not the cause of the conception of true existence [i.e. essence]".⁵⁷ The fact that *ārya-śrāvakas*, *ārya-pratyekabuddhas* and *ārya-bodhisattvas*, according to Go rampa and Jayānanda, "cognise dependently arisen phenomena as mere conventionalities (*kun rdzob tsam*) akin to illusions and so forth precisely because they are still under the influence of the non-deluded ignorance".⁵⁸ This non-deluded ignorance is the concealer of true knowledge (*shes bya'i sgrib pa*, *jñeyāvaraṇa*). 'Non-deluded ignorance' (*nyon mongs pa can ma yin pa*) is so-described, because, unlike deluded ignorance "it does not conceive true existence, and therefore it does not give rise to other

delusions such as craving".⁵⁹ So far as Go rampa and Jayānanda are concerned, an enlightened being who has eradicated not only deluded concealers, but also non-deluded concealers, "does not have the perception of even mere conventionalities (*kun rdzob tsam*), for buddhas do not have any cognitive experience of phenomenal appearances such as that of blue colour".⁶⁰

Inasmuch as both deluded and non-concealers are recognised as the 'soteriological objects of negation', there is no apparent disagreement between Tsong khapa and Go rampa. Both of them vigorously argue for the negation of those concealers. So, the question then is, what is the significance and what are the implications of eradicating the deluded concealers (*nyon sgrib, kleśāvaraṇas*) and the non-deluded concealers (*akleśāvaraṇa, nyon mongs can ma yin pa'i sgrib pa*)? For both Tsong khapa and Go rampa, the attainment of the soteriological goal is dependent on the eradication of the soteriological objects of negation.

For instance, knowing all phenomena as essentially empty and selfless, and thus as dependently arisen, necessarily requires the eradication of the deluded concealers. Without the eradication of active reifying tendencies, Tsong khapa maintains, it is not possible to know the selflessness of person (*gang zag bdag med, pudgala-nairātmya*) or the selflessness of phenomena (*chos kyi bdag med, dharmanairātmya or dharmaśūnyatā*). It is as a consequence of

eradicating the deluded concealers, and thereby coming to direct knowledge of persons and phenomena as selfless and empty, that the practitioner first attains total liberation from delusions and becomes an *arhat*, (Pali: *arahat*, Tib: *dgra bcom pa*—i.e. one who has totally destroyed enemies within). Similarly, the eradication of the non-deluded concealers or the concealers of true knowledge (*shes bya'i sgrib pa*, *jñeyāvaraṇa*) has as its consequence (and is absolutely necessary for) the attainment of freedom from even the subtlest epistemic errors and from the subtlest cognitive and psychological conditioning (*bag chags*, *vāsanā*). In Tsong khapa's view, the thorough eradication of the soteriological objects of negation results in concurrent knowledge of the two truths. One of the chief consequences of eradicating the non-deluded concealers (the concealers of true knowledge) is thus the realisation of full enlightenment—perfect Buddhahood.

It is important to note that for Tsong khapa, the idea of essence, both of the self and of phenomena, is essentially an epistemic fabrication that also carries deep cognitive and psychological implications and that is a reification produced by deluded ignorance. The Buddha adds: “Monks, I do not envision even one other obstruction...like the obstruction of ignorance” [*Iti* I.14].⁶¹ The conception of the essential self of person and the essential self of phenomena are thus both seen as forms of deluded concealer. By eradicating

ignorance at the cognitive level, along with its latent predispositions at the psychological level, both ideas of essence are likewise eradicated.

By contrasting the conception of essential self of person and the essential self of phenomena, Go rampa, on the other hand, argues that the conception of the essential self of person is more superficial than the conception of the essential self of phenomena. The deluded concealers (*nyon sgrib, kleśāvaraṇas*) are thus exclusively based in the idea of the essential self of person, whereas the concealers of true knowledge (*shes bya'i sgrib pa, jñeyāvaraṇa*) are said to be based exclusively in the conception of the essence of phenomena.⁶² While the eradication of the deluded concealers (*myon sgrib, kleśāvaraṇas*) leads to the knowledge of selflessness or insubstantiality of the self of person (*gang zag kyi bdag med, pudgala-nairātmya*), Go rampa views the eradication of the concealers of true knowledge (*shes bya'i sgrib pa, jñeyāvaraṇa*) as leading to the knowledge of emptiness or the insubstantiality of the self of phenomena (*chos kyi bdag med, dharmanairātmya or dharmaśūyatā*).⁶³ Go rampa agrees with Tsong khapa to the extent that the eradication of conception of the essential self of person does not require the eradication of empirical truths, but Go rampa denies that the eradication of the concealers of true knowledge, that is, the eradication of the idea of the essence of phenomena, is possible merely through cognitive or psychological

transformation. What is actually required is the eradication of the ontological structures of empirical truths (*tha snyad bden pa, vyāvahārikasatya*).

The question of the nature of the soteriological objects of negation thus lies at the heart of the disagreement between Tsong khapa and Go rampa. While Tsong khapa maintains that eradication of the soteriological objects of negation does not lead to eradication of empirical truths, Go rampa and his allies persistently argue that the eradication of the soteriological objects of negation must also lead to the eradication of the entire system of empirical truths. Moreover, this point also extends to the idea of essence. Scholars such as Jayānanda,⁶⁴ kLong chen,⁶⁵ Red mda' ba (1349-1412),⁶⁶ Rong ston,⁶⁷ sTag tsang (1405-?),⁶⁸ Śākya mChog ldan (1428-1507),⁶⁹ Mi pham,⁷⁰ dGe dun 'Chos 'phel,⁷¹ Singh,⁷² Poussin,⁷³ Stcherbatsky,⁷⁴ Lindtner,⁷⁵ Murti,⁷⁶ and—apart from some minor differences—all argue, along with Go rampa, that the eradication of the idea of the essence of the self entails the eradication of afflictive emotions such as craving, aversion and ignorance, while the eradication of the idea of the essence of phenomena necessarily entails the total eradication of dependently arising phenomena. Thus, all conventional phenomena, according to this view, are classified as soteriological objects of negation. For instance, dGe 'dun Chos 'phel writes:

In short, the appearances which are apparent to us as ordinary beings and that which cannot be done away with even by way of disintegrating them into thousand parts through the Sevenfold

Reasonings is itself the concealer for true knowledge. Or it is due its power...The eradication of deluded concealer culminates with the complete disappearance of the world of appearances from the perspective of conceptual mind. While the eradication of the concealer of true knowledge culminates with a complete disappearance [of the world of appearances] from the perspective of perceptual mind. Ācārya Candrakīrti therefore holds that a buddha, who has completely abandoned both the concealers, experience no such appearance...Inner clinging onto the table constitutes deluded concealer whereas the visual perception of the existence of the table constitutes the concealer of true knowledge.⁷⁷

In short, it can be said that, for Go rampa, the eradication of the two types of ignorance—deluded and non-deluded—must lead to the eradication of the entire system of a dependently arisen world. Since all dependently arisen phenomena are seen as objects of negation, what is then left is ultimate reality alone. Tsong khapa, on the other hand, argues that the eradication of the two types of ignorance cannot lead to the eradication of interdependent phenomena, since they are not the objects of negation. Thus, while Tsong khapa argues that the eradication of the soteriological objects of negation necessarily entails the eradication of delusions, rather than the ontological structures of empirical truths (*tha snyad bden pa, vyāvahārikasatya*), Go rampa argues that the eradication of the soteriological objects of negation necessarily entails the eradication, not only of delusions, *but also* of the ontological structures of empirical truths.

Having thus completed the analysis of the meanings of *samvṛti*, and the relation between these meanings and the epistemological and soteriological objects of negation, we shall turn next to a discussion of the meaning of *paramārthasatya*—ultimate truth. Before we move on, however, it is worth examining some other sources, inasmuch as they shed light on this matter concerning the soteriological objects of negation. The Buddha, for instance, has this to say: “No one other thing so obstructs people that they wander on, day and night, as when they are ensnared with delusion. But those who, letting go of delusion, shatter the mass of darkness, wander no further. Their cause is not found” [*Iti* I.14].⁷⁸ And from the Buddha again: “the passion for his resolve is a man’s sensuality, not the beautiful sense pleasures found in the world...the beauties remain as they are in the world, while the wise, in this regard, subdue their desire” [*Nibbodedhika Sutta*, AN VI.63].⁷⁹ Śāntideva makes a similar point: “any consciousnesses that arise from seeing, hearing etc., are not negated here. What is negated here is the conception of true existence which causes suffering” [VI:26].⁸⁰ There are also a number of discourses in the Pāli Canon that explain very clearly that the mind is defiled, not by the five aggregates or the objects of six senses, but rather, due to an underlying ignorance of the ephemeral, essenceless and evanescent nature of things by clinging onto them as permanent, unchanging, and substantially existent. When Ven. Śāriputra is asked by Ven. Mahā Kōṭṭhita “Now tell me,

friend Śāriputra, is the eye the fetter of forms, or are forms the fetter of the eye? Is the ear...Is the nose...Is the tongue...Is the body...Is the intellect the fetter of ideas, or are ideas the fetter of the intellect?" Śāriputra's replies:

No my friend. The eye is not the fetter of forms, nor are forms the fetter of the eye. Whatever desire and passion arises in dependence on the two of them: That is the fetter there. The ear is not the fetter of sound...The nose is not the fetter of aromas...The tongue is not the fetter of flavours...The body is not the fetter of tactile sensations...The intellect is not the fetter of ideas, nor are ideas the fetter of intellect. Whatever desire and passion arises in dependence upon the two of them: That is the fetter there [*Koṭṭhita Sutta*, SN XXXV.191].⁸¹

Śāriputra clarifies the point even further:

Suppose that a black ox and a white ox were joined with a single collar or yoke. If someone were to say, 'The black ox is the fetter of the white ox, the white ox is the fetter of the black'—speaking this way, would he be speaking rightly?" [Ven. Mahā Koṭṭhita]: "No my friend. The black ox is not the fetter of the white ox, nor is the white ox the fetter of the black. The single collar or yoke by which they are joined: that is the fetter there". [Śāriputra]: "In the same way, the eye is not the fetter of forms, nor are forms the fetter of the eye. Whatever desire and passion arises in dependence on the two of them: that is the fetter there...[*Koṭṭhita Sutta*, SN XXXV.191].⁸²

As is the case with Tsong khapa, Śāriputra and the Buddha's refusal to identify conventional phenomena as the objects of negation would appear to be directly at odds with Go rampa's account of the objects of negation and so

of ignorance and its scope. While the Buddha and his chief disciple argue for the eradication of defiled emotions and need for transformative change in this respect, Go rampa argues, not only for the eradication of defilements, but for the eradication of all conventional phenomena.

3. Meanings of *paramārthasatya*

The most remarkable distinction between Tsong khapa and Go rampa in terms of their positions regarding the meaning of *paramārthasatya* (*don dam bden pa*) lies in the criterion they apply to determine *param* (*dam pa*), meaning 'ultimate,' and *artha* (*don*), meaning 'object'. It will be shown that, for Tsong khapa, *param* (*dam pa*) is the ultimate qualification of *artha* (*don*), that is, of the object as such, whereas for Go rampa *param* (*dam pa*) is the ultimate qualification of the apprehending consciousness. For Tsong khapa, *paramārtha* (*don dam pa*) is the ontological characteristic of both apprehended objects and apprehending subjects and is not imposed upon the object by the subject. Go rampa argues, in opposition, that ultimate truth is none other than apprehending consciousness itself.

We first consider Candrakīrti's explanation of *paramārthasatya* (*don dam bden pa*) which is as follows. "Because it is an object, at the same time it is the ultimate, it is the ultimate object (*don dam pa, paramārtha*) and because it is truth, it is the ultimate truth (*don dam bden pa, paramārthasatya*)".⁸³ Tsong

khapa while commenting on Candrakirti's statement argues that within the compound term *paramārtha* (*don dam bden pa*), *satya* (*bden pa*), meaning 'truth', is that which is both *artha* (*don*), meaning 'object' (*yul, viṣaya*), and *param* (*dam pa*), meaning 'ultimate'. In this situation, "both *artha* (*don*) and *param* (*dam pa*) are taken into account as the *paramārthasatya* (*don dam bden pa*), meaning 'ultimate truth' *per se*".⁸⁴ As we can see, *param* (*dam pa*) is taken as the qualification of *artha* (*don*), the object, rather than the qualification of apprehending consciousness. In emphasising this approach, Tsong khapa argues that the meaning of *paramārthasatya* (*don dam bden pa*) is not purely epistemological in character. Whether or not phenomena are considered in relation to their respective apprehending consciousnesses, the ultimate mode of the truth of phenomena is seen as invariable.⁸⁵ Tsong khapa argues that ultimate truth is described as 'truth' in order to contrast it with conventional truth, "because of its non-deceptive (*mi slu ba*) identity. Ultimate truth does not deceive sentient beings (*'jig rten*) by presenting a mode of appearance which is different from its mode of being".⁸⁶ Conventional truth, on the other hand, *does* deceive ordinary sentient beings by presenting a mode of appearance that is contradictory to its mode of being.

Since the ultimate mode of being of all empirically given phenomena is not something imposed from outside, whether or not it is properly understood, its true mode of being is nonetheless unvarying. Since the

ultimate nature of phenomena is invariable, then if the term 'ultimate' is treated as a qualification of the apprehending consciousness, rather than of the phenomena themselves, so ultimate truth would have to be taken as simply imposed on phenomena by the apprehending consciousness. This would mean, however, that it would then be mistaken of the Buddha to claim, as he does, that: "whether or not there is the arising of *Tathāgatas*, this property stands—this regularity of the *Dhamma*, this orderliness of the *Dhamma*: All processes are inconstant...All processes are *dukkha*...All phenomena are not-self" [*Dhamma-niyāma Sutta*, AN III.137].⁸⁷ Similarly, it would be erroneous for the Buddha to make the following statement:

Now, what is dependent co-arising? From birth as a requisite condition comes aging and death. Whether or not there is the arising of *Tathāgatas*, this property stands—this regularity of the *Dhamma*, this orderliness of the *Dhamma*, this this/that conditionality. The *Tathāgata* directly awakes to that, breaks through to that. Directly wakening and breaking through to that, he declares it, teaches it, describes it, sets it forth. He reveals, it explains it, makes it plain and says, "Look. From birth as a requisite conditions comes aging and death" [*Paccaya Sutta*, SN XII.20].⁸⁸

In fact, both these statements very clearly suggest that for the Buddha, the ultimate mode of phenomena is objective and invariable rather than imposed.

Unlike Tsong khapa, Go rampa characterises *param*, 'ultimate', in the *paramārthasatya* (*don dam bden pa*), as the qualification of the apprehending

consciousness with *artha* as its corresponding object. The apprehending consciousness in this context refers to the very specific transcendental perspective that belongs to *ārya*'s (*'jig rten las 'das pa'i yeshes, lokottarajñāna*). The meaning attributed to *paramārthasatya* (*don dam bden pa*) grants, in Go rampa's view, an overriding primacy to the transcendental wisdom of *ārya* over the ontological structures of conventional phenomena. Go rampa explains:

Don (artha) refers to 'reality' (*chos nyid, dharmatā*), i.e., the object of engagement by an *ārya*'s ultimate wisdom (*yeshes dam pa*), for it is either cognisable (*rtog par bya ba*) or analysable (*brtag par bya ba*). Since there is no other object, as supreme as this, it is the ultimate (*param, dam pa*). It is [also] truth (*satya, bden pa*), for it is a non-deceptive. Thus they are conjunctively unified.⁸⁹

Go rampa's account of the meaning of *paramārthasatya* appears to have come straight from Jayānanda's commentary on the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, where he writes:

Dam pa, refers to transcendental wisdom (*'jig rten las 'das pa'i yeshes, lokottarajñāna*), whereas *don (arth)*, meaning 'object,' is its [apprehended] object, thus, [their conjunction forms] *don dam pa (paramārtha)*, meaning 'ultimate object'. This is also *bden pa (satya)*, meaning 'truth,' because it is non-deceptive (*mi slu ba*). Or, *don dam pa (paramārtha)*, means 'supreme object' (*mchog tu gyur ba'i don*), i.e., the emptiness, for there is no other supreme object which overshadows emptiness.⁹⁰

Both Jayānanda and Go rampa consider *param* (*dam pa*) as the ultimate qualification of an *ārya*'s transcendental wisdom and *artha* (*don*) as a corresponding object of that consciousness. In this sense, it is the subjective consciousness that is taken as the criterion that determines ultimate truth. Since no empirical object comes into the equation of ultimate truth, so the term *artha* (*don*) is, in Go rampa's sense, more metaphorical than actual. "There is no realisation and the realised object, nor is there object and subject".⁹¹ sTag tsang echoes the comment: "a wisdom without dual appearance is without any object".⁹² Strictly speaking, transcendental wisdom itself becomes the ultimate truth. There is no ultimate truth apart from this wisdom. Go rampa equates ultimate truth with the *ārya*'s transcendental wisdom. Hence for him, the sense of *paramārthasatya* cannot have, as it has for Tsong khapa, any ontological grounding.

The differences between Tsong khapa and Go rampa's analyses of the meaning of *paramārthasatya* are significant, in that they reflect Tsong khapa and Go rampa's deep disagreements on the question of 'what is divided into the two truths?' For Tsong khapa, the division between the two truths arises because of the dual natures of each empirically given truth. The two truths are posited precisely because they are equivalent to the conventional and ultimate natures of each empirical phenomenon. Go rampa, however, divides the truths on the basis of two different perspectives.⁹³ He argues that the two

truths cannot be posited within the framework of a particular empirical object. All empirical objects, according to him, have one and the same nature, and that nature is itself conventional truth. “Ultimate truth is to be experienced (*myang bar bya*) under a total cessation of dualistic appearance through *ārya*’s personal wisdom (*‘phags pa’i so sor rang rig pa’i yeshe*)”, and he goes to claim: “Anything that has dualistic appearance, even the omniscience (*rnam mkhyen*) must not be treated as ultimate truth”.⁹⁴ kLong chen,⁹⁵ Sa paṇ,⁹⁶ Śākya mChog ldan,⁹⁷ Rong ston⁹⁸ and Mi skyod rDo rje⁹⁹—all adopt Go rampa’s line of argument and insist on equating ultimate truth with the *ārya*’s transcendental wisdom.

So far, we have examined the meanings attributed to *saṃvṛti* and *paramārthasatya*, the nature and the scope of the objects of negation, and the significance of eradicating the objects of negation—this has made up the first part of this chapter. In the second part of this chapter, we shall compare Tsong khapa and Go rampa’s positions on the issues related to the definitions of the two truths, and as we proceed important differences at issue will become even clearer.

4. Definitions of the two truths

The criteria Tsong khapa and Go rampa apply in determining the definitions of the two truths play the most significant role in contrasting the two

accounts. For Tsong khapa, the ontological status of each empirical phenomenon satisfies the definitions of both truths. Each phenomenon, as he sees it, possesses two natures that serve as the locus of the definitions of the two truths. For Go rampa, however, the ontological status of each empirical phenomenon satisfies only the definition of conventional truth. He argues that each phenomenon has only an empirical nature, as opposed to having two natures, and that ultimate truth has a distinct ontological status.

Tsong khapa claims that each empirical phenomenon satisfies the criteria of both conventional and ultimate truth, and he also claims that each cognitive agent is capable of knowing both truths exhaustively. Each cognitive agent, according to him, is equipped with the two types of valid cognitions—empirically valid cognition and ultimately valid cognition—that are required to verify the defining characteristics of both truths. In contrast, just as the two truths are maintained as ontologically distinct, Go rampa argues that each truth must be verified by a different individual and that one individual cannot access the two truths exhaustively—a cognitive agent who knows conventional truth cannot know ultimate truth, and the one who knows ultimate truth cannot know conventional truth.

4.1. Candrakīrti's definition of the two truths

There are two slightly different definitions of the two truths that we should take into account at this point: the definition of the two truths offered by Candrakīrti and that offered by Nāgārjuna. We will compare Tsong khapa and Go rampa in relation to Candrakīrti's definitions in this section and then go on to Nāgārjuna's definition in the next. In the sixth chapter of the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, Candrakīrti defines the two truths as follows:

[The Buddha] said that all things have two natures—
 Those found by perceivers of reality and of falsities (*brdzun pa*)—
 Objects of perceivers of reality are things as they are
 Objects of perceivers of falsities are conventional truths [VI:23].¹⁰⁰

Go rampa reads *brdzun pa*, meaning 'falsity,' as an adjective describing the perceiver, rather than as referring to the perceived object. However, as Guy Newland correctly points out Tsong khapa reads *brdzun pa* as referring to the perceived object, and not as describing the perceiver.¹⁰¹ As a natural consequence, Tsong khapa defines "*saṃvṛtisatya (kun rdzob bden pa)* as [an object] found by empirically valid cognition (*tha snyad pa'i tshad ma*) which perceives false objects of knowledge",¹⁰² while "ultimate truth is defined as an object (*yul, viṣaya*) found by reasoning consciousness (*rigs shes*) perceiving, seeing reality".¹⁰³ In his commentary to the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* of

Nāgārjuna, Tsong khapa applies these two definitions with respect to the two natures of the sprout:

Each individual phenomenon—exterior¹⁰⁴ or interior¹⁰⁵—possesses dual natures—one of the ultimate and the other of the empirical. Consider the sprout for example, it possesses a nature, which is found by a reasoning consciousness perceiving reality, i.e., a non-deceptive knowable; and a nature, which is found by an empirical consciousness perceiving a deceptive object, i.e., a false knowable. The former is the sprout's nature of ultimate truth and the latter, the sprout's nature of empirical truth.¹⁰⁶

One of crucial points to be noted in Tsong khapa's definition is his insistence on grounding the two truths in the two natures of each individual phenomenon. Candrakīrti also makes the same point. "The Bhagvan Buddhas, who flawlessly mastered the defining characteristics of each of the two truths, have shown that all phenomena, i.e., interior and exterior, such as conditioned phenomena and a sprout, have two types of natures".¹⁰⁷

There are two central ideas embedded in Candrakīrti and Tsong khapa's grounding of the two truths on the two natures of each phenomenon. The first idea is that the two truths are conceptual distinctions applied with respect to some particular empirical phenomenon, since each such phenomenon fulfils the criterion of both the truths. The second idea is that the two truths should not be construed as merely *one* specific nature of a phenomenon mirrored in two different perspectives. Given the fact that each

phenomenon, according to them, possesses two natures, so each verifying consciousness has a different nature as its referent, in spite of the fact that there is only one ontological structure involved. The two truths, argues Tsong khapa, "indicate that if the characteristics of even one ontological structure—the sprout for example—are divided, it has two natures, viz., conventional and ultimate. It does not however indicate that one nature *per se* is divided into the two truths with respect to [the contrasting perspectives] of ordinary beings (*prthagjana*, *so so skye bo*) and the *āryas*".¹⁰⁸.

So, according to Tsong khapa, the ontological identity of one particular phenomenon, the sprout for instance, is categorised into two natures—its conventional nature and the ultimate nature. The conventional nature of the sprout is its deceptive or false nature—thus it appears in one way, while it exists in another way; it appears to have a self-sufficient existence, while in reality it is a dependently arisen phenomenon. The ultimate nature of the sprout, however is given in terms of its non-deceptive ultimate characteristics and these characteristics are such that the way the sprout appears to its apprehending consciousness also accords with the way it actually exists. Conventional truth is therefore defined as deceptive or false, whereas ultimate truth is defined as non-deceptive.

Candrakirti's definition of the two truths is, according Go rampa, based in the idea, to which Go rampa himself holds, that the two truths are to be

associated with two different perspectives (*blo ngor*). In this regard, Go rampa reads the two verses VI:23 and VI:28 of the *Madhyamakāvatāra* of Candrakīrti together. The first of these verses defines the two truths, whereas the second verse deals with the different senses of *saṃvṛti*. The phrase *brdzun pa mthong ba*, meaning 'perceiver of falsities' in verse VI:23 is synonymous, for Go rampa, with *gti mug*, meaning 'ignorance,' or 'concealer,' in verse VI:28. Similarly, Go rampa treats *kun rdzob bden pa*, conventional truth as grasped by the perceiver of falsities, in the verse VI:23, as synonymous with *kun rdzob*, ignorance or concealer, in the verse VI:28.

Like Huntington, who translates *yang dag mthong pa* as 'correct perception,' rather than 'perceiver of reality,' and *mthong ba brdzun pa* as 'incorrect perception,' instead of 'perceiver of falsity,' Go rampa reads *brdzun pa* 'falsity' as an adjective referring to a perceiver as opposed to a perceived object.¹⁰⁹ The equating of 'correct perception' with 'perceiver of reality,' and 'incorrect perception,' with 'perceiver of falsity,' plays a vital role in Go rampa's definition of the two truths. It allows him to argue that two conflicting perspectives are indeed the underlying basis for the differentiation between the two truths. His argument is as follows:

Since it is the cognition that grasps the two natures, ultimate truth is an object (*yul*) of a reality perceiving cognition (*mthong ba yang dag*) whereas the conventional truth is an object of a falsity perceiving cognition (*mthong ba brdzun pa*).¹¹⁰

When the Bhagvān Buddha disclosed reality as it is to his disciples from the empirical standpoint, he demonstrated that all phenomena are constitutive of the two natures—conventional and ultimate. And the doctrine of the two truths based on the empty nature of all phenomena found by the wisdom of *ārya's* meditative equipoise, and the existent nature found by the power of falsity (*rdzun pa'i stobs*)—false perceiving cognition of the ordinary beings (*prthagjana*, *so so skye bo*).¹¹¹

But then, he states:

Here in the Mādhyamika system, the object itself cannot be divided into two truths. Empirical truth and ultimate truth are divided in terms of the mode of apprehension (*mthong tshul*): in terms of the subject apprehending falsehood and subject apprehending truth, or mistaken and unmistaken apprehension (*'khrul ma 'khrul*), or deluded or undeluded apprehension (*rmongs ma rmongs*), or erroneous or nonerroneous apprehension (*phyin ci log ma log*), or valid or invalid cognitions (*tshad ma yin min*).¹¹²

It is a unanimous agreement amongst all the Prāsaṅgikas and the Svātantrikas of India that [the two truths] are posited by the object-possessing mind (*yul can gyi blo*). Because the two truths are posited in terms of the object-possessing mind (*yul can gyi blo*) depending on whether it is a deluded (*rmongs*) or non-deluded (*ma rmongs*), a perception of falsity (*brdzun pa thong ba*) or perception of truth (*yang dag mthong ba*) and a mistaken (*khrul*) or an unmistaken cognition (*ma khrul*).¹¹³

Although the first two paragraphs are somewhat ambiguous, and do not expressly highlight distinctive features of Go rampa's view, the third and the

fourth paragraphs set forth the characteristic features of Go rampa's position with considerable clarity. Go rampa's commitment to a subject-based definition of the two truths sharply marks off his position from Tsong khapa's. As far as Go rampa is concerned, the definition of the two truths is entirely determined by the two contradictory cognitive perspectives associated with ignorance on the one hand and wisdom on the other and that it cannot be based in any reference to the object.

Go rampa also reinforces the 'subject-based definition' by explicitly rejecting Tsong khapa's 'object-based' definition (based in the two natures of each empirical phenomenon):

[If it were true that each phenomena has two natures], it would absurdly follow, that even one particular phenomenon such as the sprout must possess [two] empirically retrievable imputed objects [or natures] merely by designating the two truths. This must follow, for the sprout would have two natures which would be the bases of the two truths. [If you accept this], it would then follow that the object found by the false perceiving consciousness must also be absurdly found by an *ārya's* subject of the meditative equipoise. Since the two [apprehended] objects have a single ontological identity, the object [verified by the false perceiving consciousness] would affirmatively grasp the object verified by the reality perceiving consciousness.¹¹⁴

Furthermore, he states:

The conventional nature of the sprout would absurdly become its ultimate nature, for the two [natures] have only one [phenomenal]

characteristic. If you accept this, then, it would follow that the nature verified by the false perceiving consciousness would also be absurdly the nature verified by the reality perceiving consciousness. If you accept this, it would then follow what is to be verified by the false perceiving consciousness must absurdly be found by the reality perceiving consciousness. If you accept this, then, it must follow that these two [verifying cognitions] are not different insofar as their modes of the verifying the natures of objects.¹¹⁵

While these two passages directly criticise Tsong khapa's account of the two natures, they also shed light, albeit indirectly, on Go rampa's own definition and its determining criterion. Go rampa opposes the view that advocates dual natures for each empirical phenomenon arguing instead that each empirical phenomenon has only one nature, namely, its *conventional* nature. The so-called 'ultimate nature' cannot be verified in any empirical phenomenon. If a sprout, for example, actually did possess two natures—one conventional and the other ultimate, as proposed in Tsong khapa's definition—then, according to Go rampa, each nature would have to be ontologically distinct. Since the ontological structure of the sprout cannot be separated into a so-called conventional and ultimate nature, the sprout must possess only one phenomenal nature. That nature, as Go rampa understands it, is the conventional nature of the sprout. This nature is found only under the spell of ignorance, however, and hence it can be verified only under the empirical cognitions of ordinary beings (*prthagjana, so so skye bo*) and of unenlightened

āryas in post-meditative equipoise (*rjes thob*, *Prṣṭha-labdha*). However, ultimate truth is totally beyond the reach of ordinary beings and is found only through the transcendental wisdom of *ārya*.

The two immediate passages cited above also demonstrate, of course, that the defining characteristics of the two truths cannot, in Go rampa's view, be posited from within the framework of empirically given phenomena alone. Any such phenomenon can only satisfy the definition of conventional truth, and cannot satisfy the defining characteristics of ultimate truth. The ultimate truth of the sprout, for example, is totally distinct from the empirical existence of the sprout. The ontological status of the sprout, as sprout, is understood in terms of conventional truth, for it is false and deceptive. The ultimate truth of the sprout is beyond its conventional existence, beyond its existence merely *as sprout*. It is therefore not possible, in Go rampa's view, to confine the definition of ultimate truth within the framework of empirical phenomena.

Ultimate truth, for Go rampa, requires the metaphysical transcendence of empirical or conventional existence. Unlike conventional phenomena, it is neither presupposed nor projected by ignorance. Ultimate truth "is inexpressible through words and is beyond the scope of mind".¹¹⁶ The mind, as Go rampa understands it, is always conceptual and thus deluded. "Yet, ultimate truth" as he argues, "is experienced by an *ārya* in their meditative

equipoise, and is free from all conceptual categories (*spros pa dang dral ba*). It can neither be expressed through definition nor through any defined object nor through anything else".¹¹⁷ In Lindtner's words, Go rampa's argument can be summarised thus: "reality (*tattva*) is beyond all ontological and epistemological dualities (*dvaya*), while the empirical world of origination, destruction, and so forth is illusory—due merely to ignorance (*avidya*)".¹¹⁸

Another important issue that arises in relation to Go rampa's definition is his characterisation of verifying cognitions. He agrees with Tsong khapa about the need for two different cognitive resources, viz., 'reality-perceiving cognition' (*yang dag mthong ba*) and 'falsity-perceiving cognition' (*brdzun pa mthong ba*). Both thinkers agree that 'reality-perceiving cognition' verifies ultimate reality, whereas 'falsity-perceiving cognition' verifies conventional truth.¹¹⁹ This agreement is, however, superficial. In contrast with Tsong khapa, who argues that each cognitive agent should possess both cognitive modes, Go rampa argues that an enlightened being has consciousness realising ultimate truth, but does not have consciousness realising conventional truth, whereas an ordinary being has consciousness perceiving conventional truth, but does not have consciousness realising ultimate truth. The only possible exception here is an *ārya*, who is neither ordinary nor fully enlightened and who has, according to Go rampa, both verifying

consciousnesses. This general line of argument appears to come directly from Jayānanda:

Perceivers of reality consist of the Bhagvān Buddhas, who flawlessly understand the natures of things. [Ultimate] reality (*de kho na nyid, tathatā*) amounts to their [apprehended] objects. However their apprehended objects and subjects comprised of unperceived objects and [unperceived] subjects... Perceivers of falsities are erroneous, for they do not realise reality. Besides, they grasp onto false things. Objects, that they apprehend are conventional truths (*kun rdzob bden pa, samvṛtisatya*).¹²⁰

Jayānanda argues that an enlightened being perceives only ultimate truth and possesses only the transcendental wisdom. Ultimate truth is an object certified by the transcendental wisdom. But as Lindtner puts it, “the ultimate truth is the object of a cognition without an object (*advayañāna*), and thus only an object metaphorically speaking (*upādāyaprajñapti*)”.¹²¹ Yet, ultimate truth, “as it is beyond all categories of thoughts, is cognitively experienced without duality of subject and object”.¹²² As matter of fact, “in the ultimate context”, says Jayānanda, “there is not even the slightest existence of object and subject”.¹²³ Go rampa agrees.

In concluding this section, we can say that in Tsong khapa’s view, the criteria that determine the defining characteristics of the two truths are the two natures of each empirical phenomenon and they are verified by their corresponding valid cognitions. By rejecting the two natures of each empirically given phenomenon, Go rampa, however, considers wisdom and

ignorance as the criteria that determine the defining characteristics of the two truths. Like Go rampa, kLong chen,¹²⁴ Sa paṇ,¹²⁵ Red mda' ba,¹²⁶ Mi pham,¹²⁷ Śākya mChog ldan,¹²⁸ sTag tsang,¹²⁹ Rong ston,¹³⁰ Mi skyod rDo rje,¹³¹ and dGe 'dun Chos 'phel,¹³² all formulate the definitions of the two truths in terms of the distinctions between the ignorant experiences of ordinary beings (*so skye*, *prthagjana*) and the experiences of an *ārya's* wisdom. They are unanimous in asserting that ultimate truth is that which is certified by wisdom, while conventional truth is that which is certified by ignorance. In like fashion, the definitions offered by modern interpreters such as, Murti,¹³³ Singh,¹³⁴ Poussin,¹³⁵ Huntington,¹³⁶ Williams¹³⁷ etc., all ground the two truths in these two contradictory viewpoints.

Yet among modern thinkers, although Huntington and Williams do indeed emphasise 'correct perception' and 'delusory perception' as the basis of the distinction between ultimate and conventional truth, they nevertheless also attempt to preserve the compatibility between emptiness and dependent arising. "Emptiness", as Huntington puts it, "must resonate far down into the core of everyday experience".¹³⁸ Similarly, Williams argues that "emptiness and dependent origination mutually imply each other".¹³⁹ In arguing thus, Williams and Huntington seem to rather unwittingly advance what are actually contradictory positions— it is as if they would put one foot into Go rampa's shoe and the other into Tsong khapa's. If empirical truth were purely

reified by delusory perceptions, as the 'Go rampan' definition to which they commit themselves implies, then Huntington and Williams would have to deny the possibility of the perception of dependently arisen phenomena by an enlightened being. Since the manner in which they define the two truths means that the realm of conventional truth is the realm exclusively verified by delusory cognitive experience, and since an enlightened being has supposedly eradicated all such delusion, then according to Huntington and William's definition, an enlightened person must not have the cognitive experience of dependently arisen phenomena. Yet since they also claim that emptiness and dependently arisen phenomena are mutually interlocking, so without dependently arisen phenomena, there cannot be empty phenomena. The seemingly inevitable conclusion is that an enlightened being, lacking any experience of dependently arisen phenomena, cannot have the cognitive experience of emptiness. It appears that Huntington and Williams must either relinquish their commitment to a mutual entailment between emptiness and dependent arising, or else relinquish their definition of two truths as based in incompatible cognitive capacities and experiences. Either way, they cannot plausibly retain both commitments. Neither Tsong khapa nor Go rampa face this dilemma. The former maintains the compatible relationship between the two truths, but utterly rejects the idea that the conventional truth is the construct of ignorant consciousness; the latter utterly rejects any compatibility

between the two truths, advocating instead that conventional truth is indeed the construct of ignorant consciousness.

To summarise then: in the first definition (that of Candrakirti), the debate between Tsong khapa and Go rampa regarding the definitions of the two truths emerges out of their disagreement as to the proper criteria that determine the defining characteristics of the two truths. Tsong khapa considers the two natures of each phenomenon, as verified by the two corresponding cognitive resources of each cognitive agent, as determining the respective characteristics of the two truths. The conventional nature of empirical phenomenon, as verified by empirically valid consciousness, determines the definition of conventional truth; the ultimate nature of the same empirical phenomenon, as verified by the ultimately valid consciousness, determines the definition of ultimate truth. Since, ultimate truth and conventional truth are both ontologically, as well as epistemologically interdependent, knowledge of empirically given phenomena as dependently arisen suffices for knowledge of both truths. Go rampa, as we have seen, rejects Tsong khapa's 'dual nature' account, treating each empirical phenomenon as satisfying only the definition of conventional truth and taking the definition of ultimate truth to be ontologically and epistemologically distinct from conventional truth. It is through the ordinary senses of either an ordinary being or an unenlightened *ārya* that the definition

of conventional truth is verified—no fully enlightened being verifies the defining characteristics of conventional truth at all. Similarly, no ordinary being can verify the definition of ultimate truth. Since ultimate truth transcends conventional truth, the knowledge of empirically given phenomena as dependently arisen could not satisfy the knowledge of ultimate truth.

4.2. Nāgārjuna's definition of the two truths

Let us now move on to consider Tsong khapa and Go rampa's view regarding the definition of the two truths offered by Nāgārjuna in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Nāgārjuna first defines ultimate truth in the following words:

Not to be realised from the other, peaceful,
 Not elaborated by elaborations,
 Not conceptualised and not a separate identity.
 That is the characteristic of [ultimate] reality [XVIII: 9].¹⁴⁰

Now we turn to Tsong khapa and Go rampa's comments on this statement.

First Tsong khapa:

[Ultimate truth] is not to be realised from another. Other persons can merely explain it, but cannot [make the meditator] directly realise it. Instead, it is to be personally realised through an undefiled wisdom (*zag med kyi yeshes*). It is peaceful. Just as a person without cataracts

does not see falling hairs, [ultimate truth] is free from inherent essence. It cannot thus be elaborated through the vocal elaborations, meaning, it cannot be expressed. 'Conceptualisation' refers to the operations of mind. At the point when the true nature of things as they are, is consummated, the operations of mind however, temporarily ceases. It is thus not conceptualised. In whatever way should one phenomenon fulfil the criterion of ultimate truth, [the ultimate truth] of all other phenomena have the same identity. Thus, from the ultimate standpoint, there are no separate identities.¹⁴¹

Next Go rampa:

Ultimate truth must not be realised by the naïve ordinary beings by means of the other's [explanatory] terms or logical reasons etc., as it actually is. Instead, it is rather to be realised by *ārya's* personal wisdom in the meditative equipoise by way of not seeing anything at all. Since nothing is established primordially, it is peaceful. Since it is not an object to be expressed through vocal elaboration by way of clinging towards it, [ultimate truth], is not elaborated. It is beyond the scope of mind and the mental factors, thus no conception whatsoever can conceptualise it. Since no distinction whatsoever exists, there are no separate identities. These fivefold features are thus defining characteristics of the reality of ultimate truth (*don dam pa'i de kho na nyid*).¹⁴²

Except for some minor differences in their choice of words, Tsong khapa and Go rampa render Nāgārjuna's statement in terms that appear, on the face of it, to be virtually identical. A closer look at these two interpretations,

however, shows that they imply quite different and irreconcilable conclusions.

Go rampa interprets Nāgārjuna's account on the assumption that Nāgārjuna is making metaphysical claims about the nature of ultimate truth. This mode of interpretation is not surprising given Go rampa's commitment to a conception of ultimate truth as ontologically, epistemologically and soteriologically transcendent of conventional truth. In fact, in order to reinforce the metaphysical nature of ultimate truth, Go rampa goes so far as to combine its definition with that of essence (*rang bzhin, svabhāva*). In his commentary on the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* [XV:2], in the chapter on the 'Analysis of Essence', Go rampa contentiously identifies ultimate truth with the defining characteristics of essence:

[Question]: But what is the nature of the reality of phenomena?

[Reply]: It is not possible to reveal its exact nature. However, to facilitate its understanding by the disciples, the real nature of phenomena is disclosed as the apprehended sphere of the uncontaminated wisdom. It constitutes three main defining characteristics: namely, a nature which is not created by causes and conditions; exists independently of the conventions and the other phenomena; and does not change. For example, the transcendence of conceptual elaboration (*spros dral, aprapañca*) fulfils its defining characteristics.¹⁴³

Go rampa's commitment to the absolute characterisation of ultimate truth is nowhere expressed so clearly or boldly as in the above statement in which he uses Nāgārjuna's definition of essence as a means to define ultimate truth. Like Nāgārjuna's hypothetical essence, Go rampa argues that ultimate truth is 'ontologically unconditioned', and, hence, it is not a dependently arisen phenomenon; it is distinct from empirical phenomena in every sense of the word; it is independent of conceptual-linguistic conventions; it is an absolutely timeless and eternally unchanging phenomenon. It is crucial to read Go rampa's interpretation of Nāgārjuna's definition of ultimate truth against this background. If we do this, it becomes clear that, for Go rampa, Nāgārjuna's statement [XVIII:9] is only concerned with metaphysically unitary and ineffable ultimate truth.

Go rampa applies the same metaphysical interpretation to the Buddha's following statement on ultimate truth.

There is, monks, an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unfabricated. If there were not that unborn... there would not be the case that emancipation from the born, become, made, fabricated would be discerned. But precisely because there is an unborn..., emancipation from the born...is thus discerned. The born, become, produced, made, fabricated, impermanent, composed of aging and death, a nest of illness, perishing, come from nourishment and the guide [that is craving] is unfit for delight. The freedom from that is calm, permanent, beyond inference, unborn, unproduced, the sorrowless, stainless state, the cessation of stressful qualities, the stilling of fabrications, bliss [*Iti* 43].¹⁴⁴

And as the Buddha also states:

Freed, dissociated and released from ten things, the *Tathāgata* dwells with unrestricted awareness, *Vahuna*. Which ten? Freed, dissociated and released from form... feeling... perception... processes... consciousness... birth...aging...death...dukkha...defilement, he dwells with unrestricted awareness. Just as a red, blue, or white lotus born in the water and growing in the water, rises up above the water and stands with no water adhering to it, in the same way the *Tathāgata*—freed, dissociated and released from these ten things—dwells with unrestricted awareness [*Bahuna Sutta*, AN X.81].¹⁴⁵

For Tsong khapa, on the other hand, both Nāgārjuna's definition and the Buddha's statements do not in anyway present an account of the metaphysically transcendent nature of ultimate truth. According to Tsong khapa, Nāgārjuna's definition and the Buddha's statements on ultimate truth, although they have ontological implications, they directly attend to psychological, cognitive and epistemological issues related to the *experiential nature* of ultimate truth. Since it is not possible for ultimate truth to be known merely by another's verbal explanations, so, Tsong khapa argues, it is experienced personally within one's own psychophysical aggregates by one's own valid consciousness. In Kalupahana's words, "it is knowledge for which one does not depend upon another, primarily because it pertains to arising and ceasing of empirical phenomena. It involves personal verification, a

verification that can be accomplished by someone before one begins to formulate any right-view".¹⁴⁶ In this sense, not only is ultimate truth beyond linguistic descriptions, but it is also beyond the conceptual mind. Thus the Buddha explains how ultimate truth (i.e. *nirvāṇa*) is transcendently experienced as follows:

Monks, that sphere should be realised where the eye (vision) stops and the perception (mental nothing) of form fades. That sphere is to be realised where the ear stops and the perception of sound fades...where the nose stops and the perception of aroma fades...where the tongue stops and the perception of flavour fades...where the body stops and the perception of tactile sensation fades...where the intellect stops and the perception of idea/phenomena fades: That sphere should be realised [SN XXXV.116].¹⁴⁷

Finally, to put the above considerations into clearer perspective, let us consider one last point, namely, the relationship between the concepts of dependent arising (*pratityasamutpanna*) and dependently arisen phenomena (*pratityasamutpāda*), and the concept of ultimate truth. In highlighting the nature of dependent arising, Nāgārjuna makes the following statement:

Whatever arises in dependence upon whatever
Is neither identical to it
Nor is it different from it.
It is therefore, neither annihilated nor eternal [XVIII: 10].¹⁴⁸

Tsong khapa reads this statement as Nāgārjuna's definition of 'worldly' or 'mundane' reality (*'jig rten pa'i de kho na nyid kyi mtshan nyid*),¹⁴⁹ while Go rampa interprets it as the definition of 'conventional reality' (*kun rdzob kyi de kho na nyid*).¹⁵⁰ Although there is sharp difference in their usage of the terms at issue here—'worldly' or 'mundane' versus 'conventional' reality, this is not the key issue. In fact, both Tsong khapa and Go rampa tend to use these two expressions interchangeably. What matters in this context is what Tsong khapa and Go rampa each aim to achieve by means of their respective readings. By taking verse XVIII:10 as giving a definition of 'worldly' or 'mundane reality' (*'jig rten pa'i de kho na nyid kyi mtshan nyid*), Tsong khapa draws a contrast with verse XVIII:9 of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* in which Nāgārjuna defines 'transworldly' or 'supramundane reality' (*'jig rten las 'das pa'i de kho na nyid*). In making this contrast, Tsong khapa is also contrasting the truth verified by empirically valid consciousness (worldly or mundane consciousness) with truth verified by ultimately valid consciousness (supramundane or transcendental consciousness). In treating verse XVIII:10 as defining 'conventional reality' (*kun rdzob kyi de kho na nyid*), Go rampa, however, aims to contrast the 'truth verified by ignorance' (incorrect perception) with the 'truth verified by wisdom' (transcendental mind).

Although Tsong khapa and Go rampa both make use of the principle of dependent arising, and therefore of emptiness, as a logical principle to

explain the nature of dependently arisen phenomena and their relation to emptiness, on the most crucial issues—namely, the compatibility between the principle of emptiness and empty phenomena, and between the principle of dependent arising and dependently arisen phenomena—the differences between the two positions are irreconcilable. Tsong khapa mobilises the principle of dependent arising, and so of emptiness, to establish the ultimate truth of all phenomena as dependently arisen, and, therefore, as empty. In contrast, Go rampa mobilises the principle of dependent arising, and so of emptiness, to reject the idea of dependently arisen, and therefore empty, phenomena as the ultimate truth of all phenomena.

For Tsong khapa, just as there is an essential compatibility between dependently arisen and empty phenomena, so too is there an essential compatibility between the two truths. As dependently arisen, empty phenomena are not constructions of ignorant consciousness, neither is conventional truth such a construction. Both truths are actual truths that stand on an equal footing. Moreover, whosoever knows conventional truth, either directly or inferentially, also, according to this view, knows ultimate truth; whosoever knows ultimate truth also knows phenomena as dependently arisen, and hence knows phenomena as empty. On the other hand, whosoever does not know conventional truth also does not know ultimate truth; whosoever does not know ultimate truth, also does not know

phenomena as dependently arisen, and hence does not know phenomena as empty. For Go rampa, however, just as is the case with respect to dependently arisen and empty phenomena, so are the two truths entirely inconsistent with one another. Accordingly, whoever knows conventional truth does not know ultimate truth, whereas one who knows ultimate truth does not know conventional truth; whoever knows phenomena as dependently arisen does not know phenomena as empty, whereas whoever knows phenomena as empty does not know phenomena as dependently arisen.

Let us now close the second part of this chapter with a brief review. Granting ultimate truth a metaphysically independent status, Go rampa interprets both Nāgārjuna's definition and the Buddha's statements as demonstrations of the metaphysically unconditioned and transcendental nature of ultimate truth. This interpretation is central to Go rampa's formulation of an absolutist view of ultimate truth and his denial of the credibility of dependently arisen phenomena. This allows Go rampa to formulate ultimate truth or *Tathāgata* as ontologically absolute. Since ultimate truth is transcendent of empirical truth in every sense, so, as Murti puts it, "the absolute is beyond the scope of discursive thought, language and empirical activity...It is in fact the unutterable (*anābhilāpya*), the unthinkable, unteachable".¹⁵¹ In contrast, since Tsong khapa maintains the mutual

interlocking of the two truths, he argues that both Nāgārjuna and the Buddha's position on ultimate truth does not, in any way, affirm the metaphysical or transcendental ontological status of such truth. The Buddha and Nāgārjuna's statements, as Tsong khapa sees the matter, point instead to the transcendental experience of the very same empirically given phenomenon (i.e. one's own psychophysical aggregates) as realised by means of valid consciousness. Thus Nāgārjuna writes: "without relying upon empirical (truth), the meaning of the ultimate cannot be disclosed. Without realising the meaning of the ultimate, nirvāṇa is not attained" [XXIV:10]¹⁵² and "saṃsāra and nirvāṇa do not exist as two [individuals]. The exhaustive knowledge of saṃsāra is itself defined as nirvāṇa" [6].¹⁵³

Conclusion

Tsong khapa and Go rampa's definitions of the two truths are completely divergent and irreconcilable. The divergence between them is most clearly visible in relation to their respective accounts of the meanings of the term *saṃvṛti*. Excluding essence superimposed by ignorance (i.e., a concealer), Tsong khapa argues that all empirically given truths (*tha snyad bden pa*, *vyāvahārikasatya*) or conventional truths (*kun rdzob bden pa*, *saṃvṛtisatya*) are not posited by ignorance. Therefore, empirical truths do not arise as result of ignorance. On the other hand, Go rampa argues that all empirically given

truths and their experiences, either perceptually or conceptually, are ultimately reducible to the effects of ignorance, since they are wholly posited by ignorance. Whether the phenomenal world is described in terms of conventional truth (*kun rdzob bden pa, saṃvṛtisatya*) or empirical truth (*tha snyad bden pa, vyāvahārikasatya*), or even in terms of dependently arisen phenomena (*pratityasamutpanna-dharma*), so far as Go rampa is concerned, it is only under the spell of ignorance that we experience the empirical world.

Regarding their positions on the cognitive agents of the two truths, Tsong khapa not only categorises *āryas* and buddhas as the appropriate cognitive agents of ultimate truth, but he also allows that ordinary beings (*so skye, pṛthagjana*) who are conceptually familiar with the Mādhyamika philosophy may be categorised in this way. Each cognitive agent, according to Tsong khapa, is equipped with the necessary cognitive and epistemic resources—ultimately valid consciousness and the empirically valid consciousness—to verify both the truths, and this is so in spite of the fact that the way in which the truths are accessed varies from direct realisation to inferential realisation. In clear contrast, Go rampa refuses to accept ordinary beings as cognitive agents of ultimate truth or buddhas as cognitive agents of conventional truth. As he sees it, no ordinary being is able to realise ultimate truth and no buddha experiences conventional truth.

Since Tsong khapa grounds the defining characteristics of the two truths on the two natures of all empirically given phenomena, and treats empirically valid consciousness and ultimately valid consciousness as their determining criteria, the two truths are not reducible to two contradictory perspectives. Although the defining characteristics of the two truths are verified through separate epistemic pathways—namely, empirical truth through empirically valid consciousness and ultimate truth through ultimately valid consciousness—they are nonetheless everywhere inextricably joined. Thus the two truths, according to Tsong khapa, stand on an equal epistemological and ontological footing. This allows him to argue that the knowledge of conventional truth requires the knowledge of ultimate truth, and, similarly, that the knowledge of ultimate truth requires knowledge of conventional truth. The equal status of the two truths also allows Tsong khapa to argue that the knowledge of phenomena as dependently arisen (*rten cing 'brel bar byung ba'i chos*, *pratityasamutpanna-dharma*) amounts to knowing phenomena as essentially empty (*stong pa*, *śūnya*,) and that knowing phenomena as essentially empty amounts to knowing them as dependently arisen.

Go rampa, however, grounds the definition of the two truths on the two contradictory perspectives associated with the cognitive experiences of ordinary beings (*so skye*, *prthagjana*), on the one hand, and those of *āryas*, on the other. Conventional truths are reducible to ignorance, while ultimate

truth is equated with transcendental wisdom, or *Tathāgata*. As ordinary beings are deluded beings, their experiences are, in their entirety, based on conventional truth and thus they have strictly no access to ultimate truth. Fully enlightened beings, however, experience ultimate truth exclusively.

Closely tied to the meanings and definitions of the two truths is the nature and scope of the objects of negation—concealers (*sgrib pa*)—one of the central points of disagreement between Tsong khapa and Go rampa. The implications of the way in which the objects of negation are understood have reverberated throughout this chapter. The meanings and definitions of the two truths proposed by Tsong khapa and Go rampa can be seen as being derived from their views regarding the objects of negation. As we have seen, Go rampa identifies empirical senses, their corresponding objects, and resultant consciousnesses, as the objects of negation, or, to be precise, as concealers. Tsong khapa on the other hand, categorically rejects this view. According to Go rampa, not only defilements, but also senses, objects and consciousnesses—all conventional truths—are concealers of true knowledge, and so are objects of negation. His definition of the two truths is formulated accordingly.

CHAPTER III

LANGUAGE, CONCEPTUAL MIND & ULTIMATE TRUTH

Introduction

In this chapter, I pursue a comparative analysis of the two Tibetan Prāsaṅgika accounts by focusing on the question, 'Is ultimate truth an object of knowledge of the conceptual mind?' This will entail an examination as to whether or not ultimate truth is linguistically expressible and conceptually knowable. The first and second sections will illustrate the ineffable and the inconceivable nature of ultimate truth by analysing the limits of language and the limits of conceptual mind, making particular reference to the much-used 'cataract' analogy. In the third section, we will analyse the validity and significance of the conceptual right-view—itself a topic closely related to the issues concerning the limits of language and conceptual mind.

The analysis of the validity and the significance of the conceptual right-view is important for two reasons. First, the validity of the conceptual right-view is closely connected to the capacity of conceptual mind to make the ultimate truth intelligible. Second, the idea of the right-view occupies a central position in the Buddhist account of the path by which epistemological and soteriological perfection is achieved. The Buddha himself considers the

right-view as the forerunner of all spiritual practices. The analysis of the validity of the conceptual right-view will also enable us to draw clear distinctions between Tsong khapa and Go rampa's views on the limits of the conceptual mind. It will also set the stage for the discussions in the next chapter wherein the 'non-conceptual right-view', or, as it is also known, the 'experiential right-view', is examined in detail.

1. The limits of language and the limits of conceptual mind: The cataract analogy and its applications

In most of the Mādhyamika philosophical literature, the ineffability and inconceivability of ultimate truth is illustrated by employing, as an analogy, the contrast between impaired and healthy vision. For example, Candrakīrti states in the *Madhyamakāvatāra*: "Due to cataracts (or ophthalmia), one sees illusions such as falling hairs, which are false with respect to the object. One with clear vision sees them as they are. [The perception of ultimate truth] must be understood in this way" [VI: 29].¹ In commenting on this analogy, Tsong khapa² and Go rampa³ both agree that a person with cataracts might see hairs falling from the sky, while the person with clear vision will not see such falling hairs anywhere. In such a circumstance, if a visually unimpaired person tells a visually impaired person 'there is no hair falling from the sky anywhere', acceptance of this statement by the one whose vision is impaired

will nevertheless not prevent that person from seeing the hairs. On this point Tsong khapa and Go rampa agree, but they disagree as to how this should be interpreted and, in particular, as to whether or not this really does mean that the person with impaired vision has understood the nonexistence of the hairs.

The fact that mere assent to a statement describing some visual, or other appearance, as illusory, typically does not prevent the illusion from being experienced—in the same way that the person with cataracts, even though they may assent to the claim that the falling hairs they see are not real, will nevertheless continue to see falling hairs—indicates, for both Tsong khapa and Go rampa, the limited power of linguistic expression over our cognitive and perceptual processes, and so indicates also the limited power and role of conceptual mind.

Although a visually impaired person might understand the illusory character of the falling hairs, he cannot have direct perception of the nonexistence of falling hairs. Therefore, the experience of falling hairs by a visually impaired person persists despite his own conceptual understanding of the real state of affairs. The only solution for the visually impaired person, if the appearance of falling hairs is to cease, is therefore to develop better perceptual abilities—to be cured of the cataracts. When we look to the example of the person with cataracts, no matter what their conceptual understanding, that understanding is always inadequate to dispel the illusion

of falling hairs and thus we see the limited character of *conceptual understanding*. When we look to the case of the person without cataracts, whose vision is unimpaired, his inability to communicate his conceptual understanding to one whose vision is impaired demonstrates the limits of *linguistic expression*.

So far as Tsong khapa is concerned, a person with cataracts can form some conceptual understanding of the illusory character of the falling hairs that appear in his vision by hearing an account that explains those hairs as indeed illusory. Similarly, when ordinary beings listen to explanations concerning ultimate reality, they too can form some conceptual understanding of ultimate truth. Go rampa argues, however, that a person with cataracts cannot form any understanding of the illusory nature of the falling hairs they see. To form such an understanding, according to Go rampa, would actually require direct experience of the reality—that is, visual experience from which the illusory falling hairs were absent. In the same way, Go rampa argues, ordinary beings cannot form any understanding concerning ultimate reality merely by listening to explanations of ultimate reality—only an *ārya* who personally and directly experiences ultimate reality can develop such an understanding.⁴

Both Go rampa and Tsong khapa use the cataract analogy, though to different ends, in a way that explicitly treats the cognitive abilities of ordinary

beings (*so skyes, prthagjana*) on the model of the visual capacities of persons whose vision is impaired and that treats the cognitive capacities of fully enlightened beings on the model of the visual capacities of those whose vision is normal and unimpaired. The cognitive ability of ordinary beings is obscured by the delusion of primal ignorance in the same way that vision is impaired by the presence of cataracts. It is due to the influence of primal ignorance that ordinary beings continue to reify essences. In contrast, the cognitive capacities of fully enlightened beings are, analogously with the vision of those whose eyesight is clear and healthy, totally free from ignorance and the predispositions generated by prior ignorance. An enlightened being is thus free from all reifying tendencies. Moreover, just as a visually impaired person does not have immediate access to the non-illusory or unimpaired visual experience, neither does an ordinary person have direct access to ultimate truth—thus even a fully enlightened being will not be able to provide an ordinary being with the ability to perceive directly the nonexistence of essences.

The differences between ordinary and enlightened beings in their ability to gain access to ultimate truth can be further elucidated through consideration of the limits of language and of conceptual mind—each of which is, of course, dependent on the other. Tsong khapa and Go rampa argue that, so far as expressing the nature of ultimate reality is concerned, the

power of language is quite limited. Linguistic discourse depends upon linguistic convention, but ultimate reality goes beyond those conventions. Moreover, linguistic discourse only makes complete sense when what is being expressed, or the expressions used, are already known or are to some extent familiar to the listeners. The less the listeners are familiar with what is being expressed or with the expressions used, or the less these things are already known to the listeners, the less will what is said make sense to those listeners.

Suppose the visually impaired person is born with cataracts and has never experienced the world visually without the presence of falling hairs. This person cannot make full sense of the descriptions of the nonexistence of falling hairs since he lacks any perceptual reference for those descriptions. Indeed, it will be impossible to impart to this person any real understanding of what it is like to see the world without the presence of falling hairs. The case is exactly the same for ordinary persons who have never had any experience of ultimate reality free from essences and who therefore cannot make real sense of any description of such a reality. The linguistic expressions used to explain ultimate reality can make full sense only when what is to be expressed is within the reach of the cognitive framework of the listener. Explaining the limits of language to the Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita the Venerable Śāriputra states: "As far, friend, as the six bases of sense-contact

(*phassāyatana*) reach, so far reaches the (explainable) world of diffuseness (*papañca*); and as far as the world of diffuseness reaches, so far reach the six bases of sense-contact. Through the entire fading away and cessation of the six bases of sense-contact, the world of diffuseness ceases and is stilled" [AN.IV. 175].⁵ Inasmuch as ultimate reality is unknown to ordinary beings, linguistic discourse alone cannot fully bridge the gap between what is known and what is unknown to an ordinary being. In this sense, ultimate truth remains inexpressible.

Language is strictly inadequate to fully communicate the cognition of ultimate reality from one person to another. But does an ordinary person have a capacity to achieve any understanding of ultimate reality at all? To put this another way: even if linguistic expression is inadequate to the communication of ultimate reality, could the conceptual mind nevertheless allow some grasp of ultimate truth? Different interpretations of the limits of conceptual thought and inference in knowledge generate different answers to this question. Go rampa argues that the conceptual mind has no capacity whatsoever to comprehend ultimate reality. Tsong khapa, on the other hand, argues that the conceptual mind, although it does not comprehend ultimate reality directly and fully, does comprehend ultimate reality conceptually and partially. In fact, Tsong khapa considers conceptual understanding as a stepping-stone to eventual direct personal realisation of ultimate reality.

“Ordinary beings”, argues Go rampa, “simply could not understand ultimate reality either by means of listening to other’s words or by means of reasoning or by using any other means”.⁶ He insists that ultimate reality “cannot be elaborated through vocal expressions; hence it is beyond verbal elaborations (*ngag gi spros pa*). And it is also beyond the comprehension of mind and mental factors; thus no conceptual thought whatsoever can possibly encompass it”.⁷ As Go rampa sees it, ordinary beings (*so skye, prthagjana*) are not cognitive agents of ultimate truth and are totally incapable of understanding ultimate reality. Hence, listening to a discourse explaining ultimate reality cannot lead ordinary beings to comprehend ultimate reality. If, for some reason, they manage to form some ideas through inference, those ideas, and the ‘knowledge’ that they comprise, must be thoroughly incoherent. Strictly speaking, the conceptual cognitions of ordinary beings are, according to Go rampa, utterly inadequate to the task of comprehending ultimate reality.

One of the primary reasons behind Go rampa’s claim that conceptual cognition cannot access ultimate truth is that such cognition depends upon ‘universals’. Go rampa argues that “any cognition analysing the nature of reality is simply the conceptual thought grasping to a conjunctive compound of the term [universal] and the object universal”.⁸ Conceptual mind or thought is analysed by Go rampa as comprising both conceptual/perceptual

awareness and universals—including the ‘term universal’ (*sgra spyi*) and ‘object universal’ (*don spyi*)—the latter being the objects of conceptual thought. The ‘term universal’ (*sgra spyi*) refers to the concept of an object formed as a result of listening to descriptions about the object without actually seeing it. The ‘object universal’, (*don spyi*) on the other hand, is the concept of an object formed as result of seeing the object without having any prior descriptive knowledge about the object. Both of these two universals, if taken independently, make little sense, since the former is description without reference and the latter reference without description. Go rampa argues that these two universals must therefore work together in order for language and thought to be practical and meaningful.

The ‘term universal’ and ‘object universal’ conjointly form the object of thought. Conceptual thought, moreover, functions strictly within the conventional domain. It has no access whatsoever to ultimate truth since ultimate truth is utterly beyond any linguistic and conceptual conventions. Hence all conceptual cognitions, as Go rampa understands them, “are confined to grasping either one of the four extreme views, and therefore it is impossible to repudiate the conceptual categories of four extremes simultaneously”.⁹ Since the goal of enlightenment is to transcend the conceptual categories, so the repudiation of the conceptual categories is absolutely essential. Moreover, conceptual cognitions are seen as themselves

responsible for multiplying the conceptual categories rather than assisting the process of transcendence.

Recognising Go rampa's views concerning the extreme limitation of language and conceptual thought in relation to ultimate truth, Dreyfus writes: "the Sa-gya tradition insists that concepts apply only to conventional reality. Ultimate truth in Madhyamaka is completely beyond the reach of concepts. It is utterly ineffable, in the strong sense of the word".¹⁰ Dreyfus also notes that, "for the Sa-gya tradition in general and Go-ram-ba in particular, the key concept in Madhyamaka philosophy is not the absence of real existence but freedom from elaborations (*prapañca*, *spros pa*). Ultimate truth is utterly beyond the reach of elaboration".¹¹ On this matter, as on others, Go rampa thus exemplifies a more widely held view—one that is shared, notably by Śākya mChog ldan,¹² sTag tsang,¹³ Mi pham,¹⁴ mKhan po Kun bzang dPal ldan¹⁵ and dGe 'dun Chos 'phel.¹⁶ Interestingly, however, some of Go rampa's usual allies, such as kLong chen,¹⁷ Sa paṇ¹⁸ and Rong ston¹⁹ are more sympathetic to Tsong khapa's view. Like Tsong khapa, this latter group argue that logical inference must enable some form of conceptual grasp of ultimate reality—thereby providing the means that eventually leads to the direct personal realisation of ultimate reality.

Given the close link between the limits of language and the limits of the conceptual mind, Go rampa argues that while an enlightened person could

not coherently explain ultimate reality, neither could an ordinary being realise ultimate reality. Therefore he concludes: "It is not possible to explain ultimate truth either through definition, or through defined object, or by any other means in the manner it is experienced during the meditative equipoise which is free from any conceptual elaborations (*spros pa, prapañca*). This is because ultimate truth", in Go rampa's view, "is inexpressible through language and is not an apprehended object of the mind".²⁰ Tsong khapa only partly agrees with Go rampa on this point. To the extent that Tsong khapa holds that an ordinary being could not have a direct non-conceptual realisation of ultimate reality, he is in agreement with Go rampa; to the extent that Tsong khapa holds that an ordinary being does form a conceptual realisation of ultimate reality (which realisation is useful in realising ultimate reality), he is in disagreement with Go rampa.

An ordinary being does, according to Tsong khapa, have the capacity to form a conceptual understanding of ultimate reality by listening to discourses. While a conceptual understanding (an inferential knowledge) of ultimate reality is mistaken, since it assumes the universal of ultimate reality to be ultimate reality, it is nonetheless an essential prerequisite for the direct personal realisation of ultimate truth. Here it is important to distinguish Tsong khapa's view on the 'universal of ultimate reality' from his view concerning 'ultimate reality' itself and so to distinguish his view regarding

the universal from his view regarding the particular. The universal of ultimate reality is constructed through conceptual-linguistic conventions. Ultimate reality, however, is not itself a conceptual-linguistic construction and is beyond the reach of any such conceptual-linguistic conventions. Thus the universal of ultimate truth pertaining to material form, for example, is constructed on the basis of the linguistic descriptions and the conceptual grasping of emptiness of the material form, but the empty mode of the material form is not itself constructed on the basis of conceptual-linguistic conventions. So even though the universal of ultimate truth of material form is constructed on the basis of conceptual-linguistic conventions, the ultimate truth of material form is not entirely dependent on conceptual-linguistic conventions. The ontological character of empty form consequently retains its true identity in spite of the fact that different universals, both coherent and incoherent, are imposed upon it.

Confusion between the universal of ultimate truth, as universal, and ultimate truth itself, as particular, is somewhat analogous to the confusion that may arise between a face and the reflection of that face. Just as we may mistake the reflection for the actual face, so conceptual cognition mistakes the universal of ultimate truth for ultimate truth itself, thus the conceptual consciousness that realises ultimate truth is seen as erroneous. The confusion here arises partly because the conceptual mind does not have direct access to

ultimate truth, but only to the universal of ultimate truth that mediates between the conceptual mind and empty phenomena (we may say that it thereby blocks direct access to ultimate truth, but if so, it also enables indirect access). Lacking clarity on the nature of the access it does have, conceptual mind assumes that its access to the universal of ultimate truth is access to ultimate truth itself—in fact, its only knowledge of ultimate truth is inferential. The fact that inferential knowledge of ultimate truth does not constitute direct access to ultimate truth does not mean, however, that such inferential knowledge is useless. As we have already noted, for Tsong khapa, it constitutes an important epistemic relation to ultimate reality. If inferential knowledge of ultimate truth is based on valid empirical premises, rather than mere fictions or imaginations, then the inferential knowledge of ultimate truth provides the scaffolding that enables direct non-conceptual access to ultimate truth.

Tsong khapa maintains that there is a clear-cut distinction between the direct non-conceptual realisation of ultimate truth and the conceptual realisation of such truth. An ordinary being is not in a position to have direct non-conceptual realisation of ultimate reality and so, according to Tsong khapa, Candrakirti's use of the cataract analogy only indicates "the listener's failure to realise exactly what is explained, but this does not rule out [the listener's conceptual] realisation of the nonexistence of hair".²¹ By listening to

descriptions, a person with cataracts could inferentially grasp the nonexistence of hairs in spite of the fact that he does not have the capacity to see this directly. Similarly, when ultimate truth is explained linguistically, ordinary beings afflicted by deluded ignorance cannot form an understanding of ultimate truth to the level of those who are enlightened. So long as a person remains afflicted by deluded ignorance, his tendency to reify ultimate reality persists—everytime he sees things, he presupposes the existence of essences. There is no possibility, therefore, that a person afflicted in this way could directly realise ultimate truth just by listening to descriptions and explanations.

Yet since ultimate truth is not entirely ineffable,²² and not entirely incomprehensible, linguistic descriptions and explanations can be conducive to the formation of a conceptual view of ultimate reality. Consider what Tsong khapa has to say as follows:

Although the explanation of ultimate truth through an analogy does not lead to its realisation (*rtogs pa*) just as the way [ultimate truth] is seen (*mtshong ba*) by those who are free from the affliction of the cloud of ignorance. This does not indicate that [Candrakirti] accepts reality as non-realizable in a general sense. Hence, ultimate truth is not ineffable for definitive scriptural texts embodied by profound meanings and their verbal descriptions. Furthermore, it is not the case that [ultimate truth] is unrealizable by the mind associating with [verbal descriptions]. Therefore, every single statement explaining the meaning of reality (*de*

kho na nyid kyi don) as beyond the scope of consciousness and verbal description must be understood in the same light.²³

Tsong khapa also argues for a significant role for language and conceptual mind in forming a bridge between conventional knowledge and ultimate knowledge. In this respect, an inferential understanding of ultimate truth is not only possible, but is, in fact, essential as a step on the path to the direct realisation of ultimate truth. Conceptual realisation, argues Tsong khapa, serves as the causal nexus between the naïve cognitive states of an ordinary being and the eventually evolved wisdom of an *ārya*—it forms the epistemic link between the naïve reifying tendencies of an ordinary being and the direct realisation of ultimate reality. The conceptual understanding of ultimate truth, no matter how trivial it might be, acts as an epistemic bridge or vehicle that enables us to move from the conventionally known field of empirical truth to the conventionally unknown field of ultimate truth.

Inasmuch as it must be based on valid empirical premises, so the inferential knowledge of ultimate truth is linked to the experience of ordinary beings. Inasmuch as it involves an understanding of ultimate reality on the logical level, so it is linked to the transcendental experience of an *ārya*. In this way the conceptual realisation of ultimate truth gradually paves the way for the most enlightened wisdom of Buddhahood. Consequently Tsong khapa argues that the conceptual understanding of ultimate truth is absolutely

required for the possibility of such enlightenment. For Go rāmpa, on the other hand, the realisation of ultimate truth is perfectly *sui generis*. It has no prior causal conditions. It spontaneously arises when a person attains the state of *āryahood*. As the conceptual knowledge of an ordinary being, in Go rāmpa's view, does not contribute anything to the eventual realisation of the non-conceptual ultimate reality, so nothing whatsoever is required to bridge the gap between the conventional knowledge of an ordinary being and the ultimate knowledge of an *ārya*. The transition from the ordinary state to the state of *āryahood* is thus seen as a leap rather than a gradual progression.

Another important point to be noted here is that, for Go rāmpa, "the only non-deceptive subjective consciousness is the *ārya's* meditative equipoise. That which is non-deceptive from this perspective amounts to ultimate truth".²⁴ Therefore, nothing whatsoever is capable of realising ultimate reality except the wisdom of meditative equipoise. What is the cause of meditative wisdom? Is there a causal link between the ordinary cognitive state and the cognitive state of an *ārya*? For Go rāmpa, as pointed out earlier, the answer is simply 'no'. An *ārya's* wisdom in meditative equipoise arises without any traceable prior causal event. It cannot be traced back to the deluded cognitive state of an ordinary being. The direct non-conceptual realisation of ultimate truth during an *ārya's* meditative equipoise arises from

nowhere. Ultimate truth is therefore ineffable and inconceivable for Go rampa.

Moreover Go rampa explicitly rejects the role of reasoning consciousness in realising ultimate truth, arguing that “valid reasoning consciousness belongs to the conventional realm and cannot be a bridge between the two sides, despite its claim to have the realisation of ultimate truth likened to its realisation during an *ārya*’s meditative equipoise”.²⁵ Dreyfus also draws attention to this point: “when analysing the way in which inference relates to emptiness, Go-rampa uses the concept of object universal...Go-ram-pa’s point is that inference does not apprehend emptiness itself...Emptiness lies beyond the grasp of thought and language, which has access only to the object universal of emptiness”.²⁶ Dreyfus argues that Go rampa’s view, although familiar within the Dharmakirtian tradition, “has no obvious place in Madhyamaka, especially when understood from Candrakirti’s perspective”.²⁷ Dreyfus also notes that “the notion of object universal seems to be tied down to the foundationalist standpoint of the epistemologists. Nevertheless, Go-ram-ba is quite happy to use this notion to strengthen his analysis of emptiness as being beyond thought and language”.²⁸

We must now bring this discussion of the limits of language and conceptual mind to its conclusion. As we have seen, so far as Go rampa is

concerned, language and conceptual mind have no soteriological value whatsoever. Any knowledge founded on conventional truth, according to his view, is useful only within the conventional realm. Since, metaphysically speaking, ultimate truth stands beyond the conventional world, so ultimate truth is utterly inaccessible to the conventional constructions of language and conceptual mind. A correct understanding of ultimate truth unfolds only with the total eradication of the empirical world and the only way to understand ultimate reality is through non-conceptual immediacy. Yet unlike Go rampa, and as we shall see in more detail below, Tsong khapa argues that language and conceptual mind are vehicles to a direct non-conceptual understanding of ultimate truth and so he maintains that language and conceptual mind are indeed soteriologically valuable.

2. Ineffability and inconceivability of ultimate truth

At this point we shall consider a couple of important passages from the pioneers of the Madhyamaka tradition and then consider the Tibetan interpretations of these passages. In his major philosophical treatise *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* [XVIII: 7], in the course of his analysis of the ineffability and inconceivability of ultimate reality, Ācārya Nāgārjuna writes:

What is to be expressed has ceased

For, the engaged sphere of thought has ceased.

Like nirvāṇa, the ultimate reality (*dharmatā*, *chos nyid*)

Is non-arisen and non-ceased.²⁹

In the *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti glosses the above statement of Nāgārjuna in the following words:

If there is something to be expressed here, indeed it should be explained. However, when what is to be expressed has ceased, and in the context where the expressions (*tshigs*) do not have their referent objects, buddhas teach nothing whatsoever. Why is there no referent to be expressed? Because as it says, “an engaged sphere of thought (*sems, citta*) has ceased”. Engaged sphere of thought means, ‘engaged sphere of thought’. Engaged sphere is an object, meaning ‘an apprehended object’. If there were any engaged sphere of thought, then, one could argue that designations through linguistic superimposition would make sense. As [ultimate reality] is not intelligible to be an engaged sphere of thought, what would language represent through logical superimposition?

Why is there no engaged sphere of thought? Because, as it says, “like nirvāṇa, ultimate reality is non-arisen and non-ceased”. As the ultimate reality (*chos nyid, dharmatā*) is non-arisen and non-ceased, the nature of phenomena (*chos kyi ngo bo*) and defining characteristics of phenomena (*chos kyi rang bzhin*) are posited as equivalent to nirvāṇa. Thought, therefore does not engage with [ultimate reality]. Without thought’s engagement with it, there is no ground whatsoever for linguistic superimposition. Furthermore, without having [a sphere to be engaged], what reference would language represent? For this reason, a statement “buddhas taught nothing whatsoever”, still stands.³⁰

Reflecting further on the same issue in the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, Candrakīrti says that “because it is ineffable (*brjod du med, avyākṛta*), and

because it is not an object of consciousness, [ultimate truth] cannot be actually explained".³¹ Let us now consider the two Tibetan readings of these statements from Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti.

First, let us turn to Tsong khapa. In reading these passages, Tsong khapa emphasises the distinction between the standpoints of the ultimate and of the empirical. As far as Tsong khapa is concerned, any realisation, whether of conventional or ultimate truth, as well as any explanation of either of the two truths, is possible only from the empirical standpoint. The ultimate standpoint refers to the vantage point of transcendental wisdom. When transcendental wisdom engages with the transcendental mode of things, it does so by penetrating and transcending all conceptual categories. The fact that both Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti take ultimate reality to be an inexpressible (*brjod par bya ba min pa*, *avyākṛta*,) and non-engaged sphere of thought (*sems kyi spyod yul min pa*) means, according to Tsong khapa, that both Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti can be interpreted as speaking exclusively from the ultimate vantage point. "If there is anything expressible from the ultimate standpoint," Tsong khapa says, "it should be expressed. From the ultimate standpoint however, what is to be expressed has ceased and thus it appears to be nonexistent".³² Transcendental wisdom engages with the ultimate truth by dissolving all conceptual objects.³³ Consequently, from the ultimate standpoint, no phenomenon, argues Tsong khapa, retains its

discreteness, shape, colour, taste etc. when it is penetrated by the transcendental wisdom—by ultimate valid consciousness. All five aggregates are directly experienced by this wisdom as ultimately non-arisen and non-ceased, not coming and not going, not permanent and not annihilated, peaceful and beyond thought constructions. This profound experience itself amounts to experiencing nirvāṇa.³⁴ Tsong khapa therefore sees no inconsistency in arguing that, from the perspective of the ultimate, “buddhas taught nothing whatsoever”.³⁵

In Go rampa’s view, the distinction between ultimate and empirical standpoints is understood very differently. For him, the empirical standpoint refers strictly to the perspective of an ordinary being, while the ultimate standpoint refers to an *ārya*’s wisdom of the meditative equipoise. Go rampa argues that language is utterly incapable of capturing the meaning of ultimate reality. He also argues that conceptual mind is utterly incapable of grasping the meaning of ultimate reality. Therefore, regardless of the empirical and the ultimate standpoint, ultimate truth is, for Go rampa, always linguistically inexpressible and conceptually inconceivable. Hence the distinction between ultimate and empirical standpoints does not apply. Moreover ultimate truth, according to Go rampa, is nothing other than the transcendental wisdom or transcendental consciousness, Buddha or *Tathāgata*. They are all one and the same. He argues that “eventually the cognition itself becomes an undefiled

cognitive sphere and that itself is the ultimate Buddha, who is adorned with the perfections of abandonment and realisation",³⁶ and further that "ultimate reality, empirical reality and subjective wisdom—all three lose their contradistinctions", thus becoming one with the transcendental consciousness.³⁷ *Thatāgata* is, he says, by definition a transcendental phenomenon, while conventionalities, are, by definition, mundane phenomena projected by ignorance.³⁸ "*Prapañca* is a characteristic feature of causally effective things. The *Tathāgata* [i.e. ultimate truth] is however not a thing, hence it is not a category of *prapañca*, but is transcendent of *prapañca*".³⁹

Conventional truths include anything, but not what is ultimate. "Conventional truth (*kun rdzob bden pa, saṃvṛtisatya*)", as Jayānanda puts it "includes conceptual fabrications such as that of existence and nonexistence of phenomena by ordinary beings (*so sor skyed bo, prthagjana*). Such natures are nonexistent, because existence, nonexistence and so forth are logically unacceptable".⁴⁰ So long as there is an existence, either as a subject or as an object, then it cannot, according to Go rampa, be identified as ultimate truth. Subject and object, this and that, existence and nonexistence—all these dualities are categories of deluded thoughts, and ultimate truth must transcend all dualities.

Since ultimate truth is beyond language and thought, it cannot be an object of knowledge. If ultimate truth were an object of knowledge at all,

therefore knowable, according to Go rampa, “then it should be expressible by means of linguistic expressions. However, because [ultimate truth] is not an engaged sphere of thought, no linguistic expression whatsoever can express it”.⁴¹ Ultimate reality (*de bzhin nyid*) is primordially non-arisen, non-ceased and non-dualistic, not only epistemologically, but also in a metaphysical sense. Therefore, “mind with dualistic appearances cannot by any means apprehend the aspect [of non-dual ultimate reality]”.⁴² But why is an ultimate truth not an engaged sphere of mind?—“because non-arisen, non-ceased and non-dual ultimate reality is itself the nature of phenomena. And since the nature of phenomena is posited as synonymous with nirvāṇa, mind cannot engage with it”.⁴³ Go rampa goes on: “Since mind does not engage with [ultimate reality], there is no reason why [ultimate reality] should be linguistically expressed. As [mental engagement] is nonexistent, no words can capture it. In this sense buddhas taught nothing whatsoever”.⁴⁴ Words convey meaning only if there is a point of reference for those words. Should there be no point of reference verified by mind, there is simply no object to be expressed. The words are meaningless inasmuch as they do not have an affirmative message to convey. “If [ultimate truth] were an expressible object at all,” says Go rampa, “there is certainly no reason why it should not be explained, however, because ultimate reality is free from any the obsession of

linguistic determinations (*sgras bzhin pa*), [buddhas] refused to teach anything at all".⁴⁵

Although Go rampa unequivocally maintains that ultimate truth is beyond the description of words and beyond the comprehension of thought, this claim does not prevent him from holding the view that buddhas do provisionally teach the doctrine of ultimate reality in conventional terms by employing what he describes as "linguistic superimposition (*sgro brtag, samāropa*)".⁴⁶ Go rampa, and most of his Tibetan counterparts—such as Mi pham,⁴⁷ Śākya mChog ldan⁴⁸—are generally opposed to the distinction between ultimate and conventional standpoints as articulated by Tsong khapa. In dealing with the issues related to the ineffability and the inconceivability of ultimate reality, they all treat this distinction as essentially metaphorical and therefore maintain that ultimate truth is utterly ineffable and conceptually unknowable. Modern interpreters such as Murti, Singh⁴⁹ and Narain also strongly endorse Go rampa's line of argument here.⁵⁰ Murti for instance argues that "the real is utterly devoid (*Śūnya*) of these and other conceptual constructions; it is transcendent to thought and can be realised only in non-dual knowledge —*prajñā* or Intuition which is the Absolute itself".⁵¹ Harsha Narain also argues that "[Nāgārjuna's] whole endeavour is to demonstrate beyond the shadow of doubt that his *Śūnya* is totally transcendent to all possible categories of reason".⁵²

If language is utterly incapable of disclosing ultimate truth, then another important question arises: what is the point of the Buddha's active involvement in teaching about ultimate truth given the utter incapacity of words to express ultimate truth and the utter incapacity of the intellects of his disciples to grasp its meaning? As we shall see, neither Go rampa nor his traditional allies offer any convincing answer to this question. Hence as Narain puts it:

the Mādhyamika finds it extremely difficult to give us even the remotest idea of the deliverance of the ultimate experience or of enlightenment called *Prajñāpāramitā* and can do little better than to mutter that it is of the nature of silence (*tūṣṇīm-bhāva*), non-apprehension (*anupalambha*) and cessation of all expression (*prapañcopasama*). It has not knowing whatsoever (*yatra jñānasyāpa aprcārah*).⁵³

By claiming that ultimate truth is conceptually unknowable, Go rampa does not mean to say that ultimate truth is thoroughly unknowable. For him, ultimate truth is knowable by means of non-conceptual wisdom. In fact, no matter how much the two Tibetan Mādhyamikas are divided in their views regarding the intelligibility of language and the limits of conceptual mind, to the extent that they both accept ultimate reality as knowable by non-conceptual wisdom, so they both speak with a single voice. The details of non-conceptual knowledge will be discussed in the next chapter, but before

we move on, we shall briefly examine the validity of the conceptual right-view.

3. The validity of the conceptual right-view

There are three issues crucial to the analysis of the scope and the validity of the conceptual right-view: (i) the defining characteristics of right-view; (ii) its significance as the forerunner of the overall spiritual practices; and (iii) the types of right-view. Discussion of these three issues will be followed by a more focused comparative analysis of Tsong khapa and Go rampa regarding their respective accounts on the validity of the conceptual right-view.

First, let us turn to the *sūtras* and briefly summarise what they have to say on right-view. The Buddha offers the following defining characteristics of right-view. “What is right-view? Knowledge with regard to *dukkha*, knowledge with regard to the origination of *dukkha*, knowledge of the cessation of *dukkha* and knowledge with regard to the way of practice leading to the cessation of *dukkha*: this is right-view” [*Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna*, DN 22].⁵⁴ Although this definition of right-view undoubtedly reflects the Buddha’s practical and soteriological concerns, the emphasis here is on the correct knowledge of the fourfold noble truths. The reason for this is that the achievement of the soteriological goals indeed depends on correct knowledge of the four noble truths—but this in turn depends on the correct view with

respect to the nature of self or personal identity. The significance of having a correct view of self is made obvious in the Buddha's talk of 'a thicket of wrong-views':

There is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person...does not discern what ideas are fit for attention, or what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he does not attend to ideas fit for attention, and attends instead to ideas unfit for attention. This is how he attends inappropriately: "Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past? Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?" Or else he is inwardly perplexed about the immediate present: "Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?"

As he attends inappropriately in this way, one of six kinds of view arises in him: The view "I have a self" arises in him as true and established, or the view "I have no self"...or the view "It is precisely by means of self that I perceive self"...or the view "It is precisely by means of self I perceive not-self"...or the view "It is precisely by means of not-self that I perceive self" arises in him as true and established. Or else he has a view like this: "This very self of mine—the knower that is sensitive here and there to the ripening of good and bad actions—is the self of mind that is constant, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and will endure as long as eternity". This is called a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. Bound by a fetter of views, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person is not freed from birth, aging, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress and despair. He is not freed, I tell you, from suffering and stress.

The well-instructed disciple of the noble ones...discerns what ideas are fit for attention, and what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he does not attend to ideas unfit for attention, and attend [instead] to ideas fit for attention... He attends appropriately, "This is *dukkha*...This is the origination of *dukkha*...This is the cessation of *dukkha*...This is the way leading to the cessation of *dukkha*". As he attends appropriately in this way, three fetters are abandoned in him: identity-view, doubt and grasping at precepts and practices [*Sabbāsava Sutta*, MN 2].⁵⁵

The definition of the right-view is also contrasted with the definition of the wrong-view in terms of the capacity to produce skillful virtues. The fact that our perspectives on the crucial issues of reality and value have a bearing that goes well beyond mere theoretical convictions signifies the importance of right-view. Our views govern our attitudes, our actions, and our whole orientation towards life. Our views might not be clearly systematised in our mind—we might have only a hazy conceptual grasp of our belief systems—but whether systematised or not, overtly expressed or retained in silence, as Bhikkhu Bodhi puts it "these views have a far-reaching influence. They structure our perceptions, order our values, crystallise into the ideational framework through which we interpret to ourselves the meaning of our being in the world".⁵⁶ These views not only condition our physical and vocal actions, but they also determine our cognitive states and psychological well-being. Depending on the views we hold, we determine our choices and

goals. In this way ideals are turned into actuality. Although actions themselves determine their consequences, the type of actions along with the consequences that follow from them, hinge on the views from which those actions arise. Since views are not mere hypotheses, they imply an 'ontological commitment'—they involve ontological judgments and decisions on the question of what is true and what is false. Thus, in contrasting the right-view from the wrong-view, the Buddha also says:

I do not envision any one other quality by which unarisen unskilful qualities arise, and arisen unskilful qualities go to growth and proliferation, like wrong-view. When a person has wrong-view, unarisen unskilful qualities arise, and arisen unskilful qualities go to growth and proliferation. I do not envision any one other quality by which unarisen skilful qualities arise, and arisen skilful qualities go to growth and proliferation, like right-view. When a person has right-view, unarisen skilful qualities arise, and arisen skilful qualities go to growth and proliferation.

Just as when a nimb-tree seed, a bitter creeper seed, or a bitter melon seed is placed in moist soil, whatever nutriment it takes from the soil and the water, all conduces to its bitterness, acidity and distastefulness. Why is that? Because of the evil nature of the seed. In the same way, when a person has wrong-view, whatever bodily deeds he undertakes in line with that view, whatever verbal deed...whatever mental deeds he undertakes in line with that view, whatever intentions, whatever determinations, whatever vows, whatever fabrications, all lead to what is disagreeable, unpleasing, unappealing, unprofitable and stressful. Why is that? Because of the evil nature of the view...

Just as when a sugar cane seed, a rice grain, or a grape seed is placed in moist soil, whatever nutriment it takes from the soil and the

water, all conduces to its sweetness, tastiness and unalloyed delectability. Why is that? Because of the auspicious nature of the seed. In the same way, when a person has right-view, whatever bodily deeds he undertakes in line with that view, whatever verbal deeds...whatever mental deeds he undertakes in line with that view, whatever intentions, whatever vows, whatever determinations, whatever fabrications, all lead to what is agreeable, pleasing, charming, profitable and easeful. Why is that? Because of the auspicious nature of the view [AN I. 181-182, 189-90].⁵⁷

The second issue to be discussed here concerns the role of right-view as the forerunner of the entire Buddhist path, the guide for all the other factors. As the above *suttas* expressly state, the significance of right-view is at the very core of the Buddha Dharma. It enables the practitioner to understand his starting point, his destination, and the successive landmarks as his practice advances. To attempt to engage in the practice without a foundation in the right-view is to risk getting lost in the futility of undirected and misguided activities. It would be analogous to wanting to drive somewhere without consulting a roadmap or not listening to the suggestions of an experienced driver. One might get into the car and start to drive, but rather than approaching nearer to one's destination, one is just as likely to move farther away from it. To reach the desired destination, one must, at the very least, have some idea of its general direction and which roads lead to it. The

practice of the path, similarly, takes place within the framework of an understanding established by the right-view.

In recognition of the importance of right-view, the Buddha rightly places it at the very beginning of the noble eightfold path. “Bhikkhus, just as the dawn is the forerunner and first indication of the rising of the sun, so is right-view the forerunner and first indication of wholesome state” [AN X.121].⁵⁸ All other meaningful spiritual practices leading to right knowledge and right freedom have right-view as their forerunner.

For one of right-view, bhikkhus, right intention springs. For one of right intention, right speech springs up. For one of right speech, right action springs up. For one of right action, right livelihood springs up. For one of right livelihood, right effort springs up. For one of right effort, right mindfulness springs up. For one of right mindfulness, right concentration springs. For one of right concentration, right knowledge springs up. For one of right knowledge, right deliverance springs up [AN X.121].⁵⁹

Right-view is also characterised as the forerunner of the practices in the sense in which it leads to freedom from the wrong-view.

How is right-view the forerunner? One discerns wrong-view as wrong-view, and right-view as right-view. This is one’s right-view...One tries to abandon wrong-view and to enter into right-view: This is one’s right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong-view and to enter and remain in right-view: This is one’s right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right-view, right effort, and right mindfulness—run and circle around right-view [*Mahā-Cattārisaka*, MN 117].⁶⁰

The third issue at stake here concerns the different types or aspects of right-view. In its fullest measure, right-view involves a correct understanding of the entire Dharma—both mental and material phenomena—and thus its scope is equal to the range of the Dharma itself. Right-view can also be understood in a more restricted sense. For example in the *Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta* [MN 9], Śāriputra considers sixteen different aspects of right-view. He expounds principles of right-view that pertain to the efficacy of moral and immoral actions, that pertain to the four nutriments of life,⁶¹ that pertain to the four noble truths, that pertain to the twelve factors of dependent arising,⁶² and that pertain to the taints as the conditions for breeding ignorance. However, for practical purposes, all aspects of right-view are broadly classified under a twofold division: ‘conceptual right-view’ and ‘experiential right-view’.

The ‘conceptual right-view’, in technical terms, is known as *lokika-saṃyagdr̥ṣṭi* (Skt; Pāli *lokiya-sammādiṭṭhi*, Tib. ‘*jig rten pa’i yang dag pa’i lta ba*), meaning ‘mundane right-view’. In Pāli it is also described as *saccānulomika-samādiṭṭhi* the ‘right-view in conformity with truths’. This view is primarily concerned with a correct conceptual understanding of those empirical truths that operate entirely within the confines of the world. Conceptual right-view is, in most circumstances, considered equivalent to the understanding of the

efficacy of the moral laws governing the material and spiritual worlds, particularly the enunciation of how and why it is essential to abide by those laws to achieve the final goal.

The ‘experiential right-view’, the second of the two types of the right-view distinguished above, is known in technical terms as *lokottara-samīyak-dṛṣṭi* (Skt; Pāli *lokuttara-samādiṭṭhi*, Tib. ‘*jig rten las pa’i yang dag pa’i lta ba*), meaning, ‘supramundane right-view’. In Pāli this is also described as *saccapavedha-samādiṭṭhi* ‘experiential right-view’. This right-view is primarily concerned with an immediate understanding of truths within the confines of one’s own psychophysical aggregates. Although, it too operates entirely within the confines of the mundane world, it penetrates, transcends and directly reveals the supramundane nature within oneself.

Having thus briefly discussed the defining characteristics of right-view, its significance and its types, we now turn to Tsong khapa and Go rampa in order to compare their views on the validity of conceptual right-view. For both Tsong khapa and Go rampa, conceptual right-view consists of the intellectual grasp of principles enunciated in the Buddha’s teaching. It is called right-view because it conforms with the truths, although it does not fully disclose those truths. The conceptual right-view is constituted by the correct conceptual understanding of the truths arrived at by listening and studying the Buddha’s teaching, followed by deeper personal examinations

of their meanings on the conceptual level. The experiential right-view is constituted by the penetration of the truth enunciated in the Buddha's teachings through one's own immediate experience. Precisely for this reason, it is called 'right-view that penetrates the truths' (Pāli *saccapavedha-samāditṭhi*). It should be noted, however, that, on Tsong khapa's approach, the conceptual right-view conforms to both ultimate and conventional truth, since the two truths are mutually interlocking. On Go rampa's approach, on the other hand, the conceptual right-view, although it conforms with conventional truth, is inconsistent with ultimate truth. Just as the two truths are mutually contradictory and hierarchical, so the conceptual right-view and the experiential right-view are also mutually contradictory and hierarchical.

So far as the scope and the validity of conceptual right-view are concerned, Tsong khapa and Go rampa are clearly divided. For Tsong khapa, conceptual right-view is undeniably critical to the development of experiential right-view, whereas, for Go rampa, conceptual right-view is valid only in terms of grasping conventional truths by ordinary beings—it is utterly invalid so far as concerns its potential for developing the experiential right-view. These two opposing positions regarding the validity of conceptual right-view are not surprising. They are, in fact, consistent with Tsong khapa and Go rampa's earlier arguments regarding the limits of language and of the conceptual mind.

We have seen that, for Tsong khapa, ultimate truth is an object of conceptual knowledge. Ultimate truth is to a certain degree, he claims, both linguistically expressible and conceptually knowable. Consistent with that position, Tsong khapa maintains that the conceptual right-view is valid even in terms of its capability to guide the experiential right-view inasmuch as the conceptual right-view acts as forerunner for the experiential. In Bhikkhu Bodhi's words, "when...driven by keen aspiration to realise the truth embedded in the formulated principles of Dhamma, it serves as a critical phase in the development of wisdom (*pañña*), for it provides the germ out of which experiential right-view gradually evolves".⁶³ Experiential right-view, for Tsong khapa, is essentially generated by the practice of insightful meditation guided by a correct conceptual understanding of the truths. One must thus begin with a correct conceptual grasp of the teachings in order to comprehend fully the scope of the Buddha Dharma within immediate experience.

By using a correct conceptual understanding as the scaffolding for immediate experience and by cultivating the threefold training—morality, concentration and wisdom—intellectual comprehension is eventually transformed into immediate perception. This is how, according to Tsong khapa, one arrives at the stage wherein one directly penetrates empirically given truths through an immediate personal experience. "If conceptual right-

view can be compared to a hand—a hand that grasps the truth by way of concepts”, as Bhikkhu Bodhi rightly points out—“then experiential right-view can be compared to an eye—the eye of wisdom that sees directly into the true nature of existence ordinarily hidden from us by our greed, aversion and delusion”.⁶⁴

Given Go rampa’s commitment to the idea that ultimate truth is strictly linguistically inexpressible and conceptually unknowable, so the conceptual right-view must, according to Go rampa, be utterly irrelevant so far as concerns its capacity to lead to experiential right-view—it has no such capacity. Conceptual right-view is, in Go rampa’s sense, valid only within the conventions of ordinary beings, but provides no scaffolding for the development of experiential right-view. Experiential right-view, according to Go rampa, comes only with penetration into a higher ultimate truth and is reserved for an *ārya* and a buddha. Conceptual right-view is properly so-called only in the sense that it is ‘right’ or ‘consistent’ with the truths in the world of the conceptual-linguistic conventions of ordinary beings. In Go rampa’s view, just as there is only one truth, there is only one right-view—and that is the experiential right-view. Conceptual right-view is totally flawed when compared with experiential right-view. It has no validity whatsoever in terms of realising ultimate truth. The conceptual understanding of a table for example, is a conceptual right-view since it is

acceptable within the conventions of ordinary beings. It is real or true insofar as it is conceptually grasped as real or true. On the other hand, conceptually grasping the existence of the rabbit's horn must be a wrong-view, for it is unacceptable as a right-view even within the conventions of ordinary beings. Similarly, the conceptual grasp of a mirage as water is also a wrong-view for ordinary beings. There is no water in the mirage, even though it appears that way. The validity of conceptual right-view, according to Go rampa, is thus applicable only within the conventions of ordinary beings. Once a person becomes an *ārya*, his conceptual right-view becomes totally invalid, and obsolete. From an *ārya*'s perspective, as Go rampa understands it, everything in the world is a projection of ignorance. As a result, there is nothing in the world that really conforms to ultimate truth. Hence, any conceptual view is inevitably flawed and thus obstructs us from achieving the experiential right-view that actualises ultimate truth.

The conceptual right-view is also known as 'mundane right-view' (Pāli *lokiya-samādiṭṭhiti*). For Go rampa, it is mundane right-view in the sense that this right-view applies only within the domain of mundane beings as opposed to *āryas* and buddhas. It is right-view strictly from the perspective of a mundane being who has no access whatsoever to ultimate truth. Experiential right-view, on the other hand, is called 'supramundane right-view' (Pāli *lokuttara-samādiṭṭhiti*). It is supramundane right-view in the sense

that it can access that which is metaphysically higher and nobler than conventional truth. Supramundane right-view, is reserved only for an *ārya* and a buddha. As a buddha has exclusive access to supramundane truth, only the supramundane right-view is applicable. On the other hand, an *ārya*, although a cognitive agent of both mundane and supramundane truths, possesses only the supramundane right-view. From the perspective of an *ārya* the mundane right-view has no application. An *ārya* realises that the mundane truths are mere illusions and projections of ignorance without any truth. Hence any view representative of mundane truths is always flawed and mistaken from an *ārya*'s perspective. It cannot be considered a right-view. As right-view implies ontological commitment, Go rampa argues that *āryas* and buddhas are only committed to the ontological status of ultimate truth and any mundane view committed to the ontological status of conventional truth is, for them, invalid. By contrast, as an ordinary being is committed to the ontological status of mundane truths only, so the mundane right-view is valid for him.

Unlike Go rampa, Tsong khapa maintains that conceptual right-view, "though it is conceptual in nature, is closely connected with non-conceptual wisdom since it serves as the causal condition for the arising of the non-conceptual wisdom".⁶⁵ He argues that merely having the non-conceptual experience, according to Tsong khapa, does not necessarily mean that it

satisfies the criterion of non-conceptual wisdom—equivalent to experiential right-view. If it is a valid non-conceptual experience, it must have a capacity to eradicate reifying afflictive tendencies. Only then would it satisfy the criterion of non-conceptual wisdom. “Such a non-conceptual wisdom”, according to Tsong khapa, “must be preceded by critical personal analysis through conceptual wisdom”.⁶⁶

The causal relationship between conceptual right-view and experiential right-view, or between mundane right-view and supramundane right-view, is crucial to Tsong khapa’s argument. In spite of the apparent discordance between the ‘views’ at issue, Tsong khapa claims there is nonetheless an inevitable causal relation between conceptual right-view and non-conceptual right-view. “Without this causal nexus”, argues Tsong khapa, “it would be impossible for an uncontaminated path to arise from the contaminated ones. Thus no ordinary person would ever be able to attain the *āryahood*”.⁶⁷ There is an infinity of legitimate causal relations, according to Tsong khapa, wherein the relationship between causes and their effects appears to be somewhat discordant, but still they are perfectly efficacious. Blue sprouts, for example, germinate from white seed, smoke arises from fire, man arises from woman, and so on.⁶⁸ A similar causal relationship is at work, argues Tsong khapa, between the conceptual right-view and the non-conceptual right-view. “The *ārya*’s non-conceptual wisdom directly realises person and phenomenon to be

selfless and empty. In order to arouse *ārya*'s non-conceptual wisdom realising empty and selfless modes of person and phenomena," in this view, "the prior conceptual analysis of the identities of person and phenomena is essential. Only through developing a sound conceptual understanding, can one actualise its meaning by way of engaging in the non-conceptual meditation".⁶⁹

Therefore, as Tsong khapa sees matters (and in clear contrast to Go rampa), a person possessing right-view can be one of three kinds: an ordinary person, an *ārya*, or a buddha. An ordinary person initially does not have an experiential right-view. Beginning with a conceptual right-view, his practices eventually culminate in the initial penetration of the supramundane experience when reached on the path of seeing (Skt. *darśana marga*, Tib. *mthong lam*). The first phase of the direct culmination of the supramundane right-view uproots all afflictive defilements such as greed, aversion, and ignorance, transforming the conditions of a person from an ordinary state into an *ārya*—a noble person—allowing him to enter irreversibly upon the path to liberation. An *ārya*, not only has a supramundane right-view, but also must have a mundane right-view. The second phase of the direct culmination of the supramundane right-view manifests itself with the purgative capacity to uproot even the underlying latent predispositions of the previously existent afflictive defilements. This leads to the attainment of the eight

bodhisattva bhūmi or the attainment of an *arahathood*—total personal liberation.

Śāriputra's discourse on the right-view, for instance, highlights this point:

When a noble disciple has thus understood the unwholesome, the root of the unwholesome, the wholesome, and the root of the wholesome, he abandons the underlying tendency to lust, he abolishes the underlying tendency to aversion, he extirpates the underlying tendency to the view and conceit "I am", and by abandoning ignorance and arousing true knowledge he here and now makes an end of suffering. In that way too a noble disciple is one of right-view, whose view is straight, who has perfect confidence in the Dhamma and has arrived at this true Dhamma [*Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta*, MN 9].⁷⁰

The third phase of the direct supramundane right-view culminates with the attainment of perfect Buddhahood—full enlightenment. This direct supramundane right-view has the purgative capacity to eradicate even the subtlest epistemic errors—the subtle misconception of the dualistic appearances—conditioned by the previously existent latent dispositions of defilements that obstruct the attainment of full enlightenment or Buddhahood. Unlike Go rampa, Tsong khapa argues that a buddha, like an *ārya*, possesses both supramundane and mundane right-views. In fact, at the level of buddhahood, conceptual right-view and non-conceptual right-view are mutually entailing. Hence, a buddha's conceptual knowledge of phenomena as dependently arisen and the non-conceptual knowledge of phenomena as empty are synonymous.

Therefore, the validity of conceptual right-view and the validity of experiential right-view, according to Tsong khapa, are mutually reinforcing. The validity of conceptual right-view has application for all cognitive agents—an ordinary person, an *ārya* and a buddha—while experiential right-view (conforming to ultimate truth) has application only for an *ārya* and a buddha. An ordinary person is yet to achieve the direct penetration of the supramundane path. Therefore, according to Tsong khapa, the right-view, conceptually grasped by the wise ordinary being, and transformed into direct perception with the attainment of the ‘path of seeing’ (*mtshong lam, bhāvanā mārga*), reaches its consummation with the arrival of the final goal of Buddha Dharma—the attainment of complete Buddhahood. Conceptual right-view, for Tsong khapa, is thus the forerunner of all subsequent achievements.

The Buddha himself explains that he sees no single factor so responsible for the arising of unwholesome states of mind as wrong-view, and no factor so helpful for the arising of wholesome states of mind as right-view; he says that there is no single factor so responsible for the suffering of living beings as wrong-view, and no factor so potent in promoting the good of living beings as right-view [AN I:16.2]. Therefore, in Bhikkhu Bodhi’s words, “though our conceptual orientation towards the world might seem innocuous and inconsequential, when looked at closely it reveals itself to be the decisive determinant of our whole course of future development”.⁷¹ When the

Venerable Kātyāyana (Skt; Pāli Kaccāyana) asked Buddha, “Sir, right-view, ‘right-view,’ it is said. To what extent is there right-view?” [Buddha replies]:

This world, Kaccāyana, is generally inclined towards two [views]: existence and nonexistence. But when one perceives the origination of the world as it actually is with right wisdom, the notion of “nonexistence” with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one perceives the cessation of the world as it actually is with right wisdom, the notion of “existence” with reference to the world does not occur.

By and large, Kaccāyana, this world is in bondage to attachments, clingings and biases. But one such as this does not get involved with or clinging to these attachments, clingings, fixations of awareness, biases, or latent tendencies; nor is he resolved on “my self”. He has no uncertainty or doubt that, when there is arising, only dukkha is arising; and that when there is passing away, only dukkha is passing away. In this, one’s knowledge is independent of others. It is to this extent, Kaccāyana, that there is right-view [*Kaccāyanogotta Sutta*, SN XII.15].⁷²

The *Brahmajāla Sutta* depicts sixty-two types of views⁷³ prevalent during the Buddha’s time.⁷⁴ Although the Buddha must have studied them, he realised, following his enlightenment, that none of them were satisfactory, and thus he rejected all as incoherent. All sixty-two views enumerated in the *Brahmajāla Sutta* represent, in one way or another, an extension of two basic metaphysical views—essential existence (Pāli *atthitā*, Sk. *astitva*, Tib. *yod pa*) and essential nonexistence (Pāli *n’atthitā*, Sk. *nāstitva*, Tib. *med pa*). In order to reject these two basic metaphysical views, the Buddha says: “when one sees

the origination of the world as it actually is with right wisdom, the notion of 'nonexistence' with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it actually is with right wisdom, the notion of 'existence' with reference to the world does not occur" [*Kaccāyanogotta Sutta* SN XII.15].⁷⁵ Nāgārjuna pays respect to the Buddha by echoing the same point: "I pay homage to Gautama who, out of compassionate mind, has taught the noble Dharma in order to relinquish all views" [XXVII:30].⁷⁶

Conclusion

Against the background of their views concerning the limits of language and conceptual mind, and the positions they hold regarding the validity of conceptual right-view, Tsong khapa and Go rampa arrive at radically different conclusions concerning the positions of the Buddha and of Nāgārjuna. For Tsong khapa, the Buddha and Nāgārjuna reject only metaphysical views—to be precise, wrong-views—underpinned by the assumption of essence.⁷⁷ They certainly do not reject right-views founded on a correct understanding of what is empirically given. Garfield echoes this same point: "they [i.e. dGe lugs pas] simply argue that when Nāgārjuna speaks of relinquishing "all views," he means "all false views," or "all views according to which things are inherently existent".⁷⁸ Therefore Tsong khapa argues that the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas have positions based on right-

views and so they do indeed have a view, or views, to be presented and considered. Garfield for instance suggests an example of one such view that Tsong khapa would not relinquish: "Emptiness, for Mādhyamika, is an ultimate truth. One *can* achieve a correct view—a view of things as they in fact are. Such as this view surely should not be relinquished, for this would be to relinquish the soteriological goal of all Buddhist practice".⁷⁹ Garfield therefore points out "the dGe-lugs pa's argue, one must read Nāgārjuna as suggesting straightforwardly, rationally, and without even a hint of paradox, that one should relinquish all false views, and that for the one who views emptiness as inherently existent there is no hope".⁸⁰

In clear contrast, Go rampa concludes that the Buddha and Nāgārjuna categorically reject *all* views. They express preferences between right and wrong-views and any view formulated on empirically given truths, according to Go rampa, is always underpinned by the assumptions of essence. Go rampa argues that, from the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika perspective, any so-called correct understanding of empirically given truths amounts to a metaphysical view—either it constitutes the extreme view of existence or the extreme view of nonexistence.⁸¹ Since the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas do not, strictly speaking, have any views to be presented,⁸² Go rampa maintains that "the Mādhyamikas do not have any position whatsoever".⁸³ Accordingly, except as a way of refuting the views presented by the non-Mādhyamika

philosophers through *reductio ad absurdum*, the Mādhyamikas themselves have no affirmative position whatsoever to be established.⁸⁴ Moreover, from Go rampa's standpoint, what is true for the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas is something other than what is empirically given to sense experience. What is empirically given to sense experience is true and real only for ordinary beings. Therefore, only ordinary beings adhere to views based on the understanding of empirical truths, and thus they alone have views to be presented.

For Tsong khapa, it makes no sense to assume that the Buddha, after rejecting the sixty-two metaphysical views, and appraising so much about right-view, avoided propounding any view whatsoever. On Tsong khapa's view, the Buddha's emphatic distinctions between right-view and wrong-view, coupled with his treatment of right-view as the forerunner of all beneficial practices and of wrong-view as the source of all problems, is sufficient to prove that the Buddha did not seek to relinquish all views indiscriminately. The criterion of right-view is the correct conceptual understanding or immediate experience of empirically given truths. This holds true even in the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika case. The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas, according to Tsong khapa, have views of their own and therefore, they certainly have views to be presented to their critics—such as Buddhist realists.

There is another crucial distinction of which we should be aware. For Tsong khapa, the transition from the ordinary state to Buddhhood is smooth and gradual. This transition is essentially comprised of chains of events that evolve one after the other, wherein past practices generate present effects, and present and past practices generate future effects. This transition is a gradual progression and enhancement of the conceptual right-view of an ordinary sense founded on the ordinary sense perception of the law of impermanence—of the arising and cessation of the phenomenal world. At least in this instance, the sense perception of the arising and ceasing of phenomena does not refer to a privileged or higher insight of an *ārya* or a buddha that is not shared by the ordinary person. “The perception of arising and ceasing of phenomena conditioned by various factors,” as Kalupahana puts it, “is available even to ordinary people who have not been able to completely free themselves from prejudices. Thus, there is a common denominator between the perceptions of an ordinary person and those of the enlightened one”.⁸⁵

Tsong khapa therefore argues that all kinds of higher forms of knowledge, including conceptual right-view and experiential right-view of the most enlightened person, have the conceptual right-view of the ordinary state as their foundation. This is because wisdom, free from the conception of essence, depends on the understanding of the nonexistence of essence. The

understanding of the nonexistence of essence in turn develops from the correct conceptual analysis of the nature of essence, which eventually eradicates the conception of essence.⁸⁶ What makes the difference, however, is the fact that the perceptions, or the sense experiences of the ordinary person are coloured by prejudices predisposed by underlying defilements, whereas the perceptions or the sense experiences of an enlightened being are totally free from such prejudices, since all defilements and their latent dispositions have been eradicated.

Go rampa, of course, is quite opposed to Tsong khapa in viewing the transition from the ordinary state to Buddhahood as thoroughly discontinuous and abrupt. The sensory experience of empirically given truths, including the arising and cessation of the phenomenal world and the wisdom of an enlightened person, are mutually contradictory. All empirical experiences, both perceptual and conceptual, are representative of delusional experiences. They cannot, at any cost, be causal conditions for enlightenment. There is thus no common denominator between the perceptions of a person in an ordinary and an enlightened state. Yet this makes it extremely puzzling as to how an ordinary person could elevate himself from the ordinary state to the noblest enlightened state given that s/he has no cognitive capacity whatsoever that can provide the basis, the seed, for such a transition. It appears, at least to Go rampa, to involve a metaphysical leap from the

conditioned world of empirical truths to an unconditioned world of nirvāṇa. Harsha Narain rightly points out the inherent problem in Go rāma's view: "If all views are abolished, what remains? The truth, whatever it be like—truth, the apology for truth, the substitute for truth—is believed to transcend all speech and thought, to totally elude the grasp of reason, to be wholly incommunicable".⁸⁷ Narain also asks whether the truth can as discontinuous with human reason as Go rāma makes it out to be and he adds: "If the answer is in the affirmative, Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa turn out to be two different orders not only totally discontinuous and non-interactive but also impenetrably autonomous, thereby reducing the Mādhyamika to the status of an uncompromising dualist".⁸⁸

CHAPTER IV

REALISING ULTIMATE TRUTH

Introduction

As far as the limits of language and conceptual mind are concerned, the two Tibetan Prāsaṅgikas are, as we have just seen, far removed from one another. By arguing that language can partly express ultimate truth, although not entirely, and by arguing that the conceptual mind has some access to ultimate truth, although not fully, Tsong khapa is able to advance the view that ultimate truth can be an object of knowledge even with respect to the conceptual mind. In contrast, by arguing that language is utterly incapable of expressing ultimate truth, and by arguing that the conceptual mind is utterly incapable of knowing ultimate truth, Go rampa is able to advance the view that ultimate truth is not an object of knowledge with respect to the conceptual mind at all.

The debate that we are about to explore in this chapter, however, is not primarily about whether or not ultimate truth is an object of knowledge. Both Tsong khapa and Go rampa are alike in claiming that ultimate truth is an object of knowledge at least inasmuch as it is accessible to non-conceptual

wisdom. Not only Tsong khapa and Go rampa, but all the Tibetan Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas¹ are unanimous on this point. In this chapter, the debate between Tsong khapa and Go rampa is instead focused specifically on the analysis of how, and in what ways, ultimate truth can be realised by non-conceptual wisdom. In pursuit of this aim, we shall consider the issues in relation to three different epistemological approaches:

- seeing ultimate truth by way of not seeing it;
- seeing ultimate truth by transcending conceptual elaborations;
and
- seeing ultimate truth non-dualistically.

Although the emphasis is slightly different in each of these approaches, they are nevertheless alike in that they all represent epistemic pathways geared towards the same non-conceptual realisation of ultimate truth.

Since the aim of this chapter is to provide a comparative analysis of the different epistemological models of Tsong khapa and Go rampa, so we will not, except in certain respects that are especially relevant, deal with their respective ontological positions in any detail. In this regard, however, there is one point that is worth mentioning before we go any further with the analysis: What motivates Tsong khapa and Go rampa to adopt the radically opposing epistemological viewpoints that we are about to explore? One possible answer to this question can be found in their disagreement regarding

the scope and nature of the objects of negation (*dgag bya ngos 'dzin*). As we saw in the second chapter above, for Tsong khapa, what obstructs sentient beings from attaining transcendental knowledge is concerned with defilements such as craving, aversion and delusion and with the reified conceptual essences associated with these. Reifying tendencies and reified essences are thus considered as objects of negation. Go rampa agrees with Tsong khapa inasmuch as he recognises reifying tendencies such as craving, aversion and delusion as objects of negation, but he disagrees with Tsong khapa so far as the scope and nature of reified essence is concerned. While Tsong khapa sees essence as a purely conceptual construction—as an empirically nonexistent and abstract entity that is projected and imposed *upon* conventional truth from within—Go rampa equates ‘essence’ with conventional truth. Thus he views, not merely essence, but *both* essence *and* conventional truth as purely conceptual constructions projected from within due to powers of ignorance.

Since the soteriological agenda of the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika calls for the rejection of essence as part of the objects of negation, Tsong khapa argues for the eradication of underlying reifying tendencies, such as delusion, along with conceptually reified essence. Go rampa, on the other hand, not only argues for eradicating the underlying reifying tendencies, but the entire matrix of the conventional world also. Their disagreements on the nature and

the scope of the objects of negation, as we shall see, form the basis of the arguments related to their disagreements on epistemological and soteriological matters.

One more point should be borne in mind before we approach the actual discussion: unlike the more *analytic* language employed in other chapters, the language at work in some sections of this chapter is intentionally *descriptive*. Given the nature of topics—the dynamics of meditative experiences and their philosophical implications—a purely analytical approach is often inadequate to attend to many of the crucial problems at stake. Modern scholars working on Mādhyamika philosophy usually tend to set aside anything that is related to meditative experiences. In my view, to follow such an example would be to do a serious injustice to the epistemological systems of the Mādhyamikas in general, and of Tsong khapa and Go rampa in particular. Since Tsong khapa and Go rampa's rather distinct epistemological models arise directly out of their different interpretations of the implications of certain meditative experiences, so both descriptive and analytical styles are needed in order to compare them.

1. Seeing ultimate truth by way of not seeing it

We begin the section on the analysis of 'seeing ultimate truth by way of not seeing it' with a few introductory remarks from Candrakīrti. This will be

followed by a descriptive explanation of what 'seeing ultimate truth by way of not seeing it' means and how it is experienced in the process of meditative equipoise. We then turn to a comparative analysis of the views of Tsongkhapa and Gorampa concerning the matters at issue.

In the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, Candrakīrti explains that ultimate truth is realised exclusively through personal experience. "Only through exclusive personal experiences (*rang gi myong ba nyid du*), does the true nature [of ultimate reality] become clearer to those enthusiastic listeners", he writes.² In the *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti reiterates the same point:

Because [ultimate reality] is not realised through another it is called an unrealisable through another. This means that it is not realised through another's explanation. Rather the meaning is that it is to be realised personally [or individually] (*rang nyid*).³ ...One realises ultimate reality personally by way of not realising it. True nature pertaining to things is thus not realised through anyone else, and that itself is ultimate reality.⁴

The way in which ultimate truth is seen 'by way of not seeing it' is explained by Candrakīrti in the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*. He writes:

[Question]: Is it not true that [ultimate reality] is not seen with characteristic of such [dualistic] appearance? So, how do they [i.e. āryas] see it? [Reply]: Yes, it is true that [ultimate reality is not seen with dualistic appearances]. Yet, [the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas] assert that they 'see it by way of not seeing'.⁵

Since 'seeing it by way of not seeing it' is a description of both the cognitive state of a meditator engaged in the meditation on ultimate truth and the meditative process itself, so it is essential to understand both the process and the state arrived at. Tsong khapa and Go rampa agree that, while noticing the bodily and mental processes as they arise and cease, a meditator also discerns: 'Just now it arises, just now it dissolves and ceases'. When the knowledge of the momentary and fleeting nature of aggregates becomes matured, keen, and strong, the initially discontinuous awareness of arising and cessation unfolds uninterruptedly. When keen knowledge thus carries on, intensifying its acuteness, then neither the arising of each bodily and mental process, nor its middle phase known as 'presence', nor the continuity of bodily and mental processes known as 'occurrence as unbroken flux', is apparent to the meditator. Nor are the shape of the hand, the foot, the face, the body, and so on, apparent to him either. What is apparent to the meditator "is only the ceasing of bodily and mental processes, called 'vanishing,' or 'dissolution'".⁶ In the meditative state, all objects of meditation, bodily as well as mental, seem to the meditator to be entirely absent, void, empty, or to have become nonexistent. Consequently, in this state of knowing, it appears to the meditator as if what is seen has already become absent or nonexistent by having had it vanish from being seen. Thus as the Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw rightly points out "the consciousness

engaged in noticing appears to have lost contact with the object that is being noticed. It is for that reason that a meditator may here think: 'I have lost the insight' but he should not think so".⁷

Initially the meditator's consciousness takes delight, as usual, in conceptual elaborations, for instance, of shapes (*Pāli santhana-paññati*), of the concepts of individual identity derived from the continuity of serial phenomena (*Pāli santati-paññati*), and the collective concepts derived from the agglomeration of phenomena (*Pāli samuha-paññati*).⁸ Even up to the knowledge of arising and cessation, the meditator fastens onto structures or features—such as any mark, sign, idea or image—of objects conceived or perceived. All graspable conceptual objects remain apparent to the meditator's senses. But once the knowledge of 'dissolution' is achieved in the way described above, no such conceptual formations or structures appear to consciousness. Since, at this point, cognition does not involve any graspable object, but is nonetheless engaged, albeit with an empty, cognitive sphere, so the process is fittingly described as 'seeing by way of not seeing'.

Tsong khapa and Go rampa agree with the description thus far. We now turn to a closer comparative examination of Tsong khapa and Go rampa on the issues raised by Candrakīrti in relation to 'seeing ultimate truth by way of not seeing it'. We first turn to Tsong khapa and analyse how he interprets Candrakīrti's point. But before we straightaway examine how Tsong khapa

interprets Candrakīrti, there is one key issue that needs our attention. This issue—namely, the distinction between the cognitive role of conceptual and non-conceptual wisdom forms, as we shall see, the backdrop against which Tsong khapa sets out his interpretation of Candrakīrti's position. According to Tsong khapa, it is crucial to be clear as to the distinction between the roles of the two cognitive resources, namely, conceptual wisdom—otherwise known as 'empirically valid cognition' or 'empirical wisdom'—and non-conceptual wisdom—otherwise known as 'ultimately valid cognition' or 'ultimate wisdom'. The former, as Tsong khapa characterises it, cognises things that are presented to it without analysing their ultimate mode of being, while the latter cognises the ultimate nature of things only by way of such a critical analysis. In spite of this distinction, these two valid cognitions, according to Tsong khapa, are always mutually supportive and mutually dependent, and one cannot function effectively without the support of the other. Whether the concerned cognitive agent is a buddha, or another *ārya*, or even an ordinary being, these distinctions and the mutually supportive relation between them, remain epistemically important.

Against this background, Tsong khapa explains the position taken by Candrakīrti as follows:

Yes, it is true that [the non-conceptual wisdom] does not see [ultimate reality] by way of [seeing] dualistic appearances, because dualistic appearances do not withstand the critical perspective of the [wisdom]

realising things as they truly are (*de kho na nyid kyi gzigs ngor*). However, [the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas] assert that ārya's see [ultimate truth] by way of not seeing.⁹

The key issues raised in Candrakīrti's passages concern how, and in what ways, ultimate truth is realised. As a result, the distinction between the roles of the two cognitive resources, and the way in which ultimate and conventional truth relates to them, is of central importance. Tsong khapa insists that ultimate truth is the object of non-conceptual wisdom. He argues that from the vantage point of the non-conceptual wisdom, all dualistic appearances of conventional truths disappear. Such wisdom sees phenomena as having no discrete identities or positive or affirmative qualifications whatsoever. All phenomena present themselves to such wisdom initially as in flux, as insubstantial, and eventually, as selfless and empty. The empty mode of phenomena is seen by non-conceptual wisdom through the penetration of all dualistic appearances.

Tsong khapa argues, in fact, that a direct realisation of the empty mode of phenomena is possible only by the cutting through all conventional truths by ultimate wisdom. Hence, "a mode of realising realities as they truly are (*de kho na nyid, tathātā*) is by way of not seeing the appearances of conventionalities such as psychophysical aggregates".¹⁰ In other words, ultimate wisdom realises ultimate truth by directly perceiving the ultimate characteristics of phenomena (i.e., their empty mode) without actually

perceiving the characterised phenomena as such.¹¹ This means that the ultimate truth of phenomena, such as the psychophysical aggregates, is indeed seen by way of not seeing those very phenomena.

Let us now turn to Go rampa. Unlike Tsong khapa, Go rampa takes the distinction between the conceptual wisdom and non-conceptual wisdom to be of significance only in the case of an *ārya*'s mode of cognition. Go rampa considers the *ārya* who is still in training as the sole cognitive agent of both conventional and ultimate truth. In the case of a buddha or of an ordinary being, the distinction between conceptual wisdom and non-conceptual wisdom has no relevance or application. A buddha, according to Go rampa, is not a cognitive agent of conventional truth, hence a fully enlightened being does not require non-conceptual wisdom or empirical wisdom that would enable the realisation of conventional truth. A buddha cognises ultimate truth exclusively, and thus requires only non-conceptual or ultimate wisdom. An ordinary being does not, however, have access to ultimate truth, and thus does not require non-conceptual or ultimate wisdom—conceptual or empirical wisdom serves as the sole epistemic resource for ordinary beings in their quest to understand conventional truth.

What is at issue here is not just a matter of distinguishing between an *ārya* and a buddha inasmuch as they are different cognitive agents, but instead concerns the role of ultimate wisdom as that is shared by both a

buddha and an *ārya*. From the vantage point of non-conceptual wisdom, Go rampa maintains that all conventionalities disappear. Ultimate wisdom, he argues, “does not possess apprehension of even the slight dualistic appearance [both in the conventional or in the ultimate sense], for it is thoroughly free from all epistemic misconceptions, including predisposition without any trace”.¹² When it comes to the question of how and in what ways ultimate reality is realised, at least so far as this is to be given linguistic description, Tsong khapa and Go rampa thus seem quite close. Like Tsong khapa, Go rampa argues that ultimate truth is realised by way of not seeing it—namely, by way of dissolving all dualistic appearances of conventionalities or by abjuring any positive account of ultimate truth. Both hold that conventional truth is always realised by way of engaging with dualistic appearances, while ultimate truth is realised by way of dissolving all dualistic appearances. Yet whereas Tsong khapa argues for the mutually supportive relation between conceptual wisdom and non-conceptual wisdom, even in the case of the realisation of ultimate truth, Go rampa argues that non-conceptual wisdom alone is capable of such realisation. In fact, he claims the exact opposite of Tsong khapa: Go rampa argues that non-conceptual wisdom—ultimate wisdom—can have no empirical grounding and, in gaining access to ultimate truth, it must operate entirely without reliance on any empirical epistemic resources.

Tsong khapa and Go rampa's disagreement about the status of empirical wisdom stems from their disagreement about the efficacy of conventional truth, this stems from their disagreement about the nature and the extent of the objects of negation, which in turn stems from their disagreement about the relationship between the two truths. Tsong khapa argues for the unity between the two truths, and thus does not consider conventional truths as objects of negation. Go rampa, on the other hand, argues for disunity between the two truths and does consider conventional truths as objects of negation. Similarly Tsong khapa argues for a unity between the two cognitive resources, so that even a buddha is said to be equipped with both empirical and ultimate wisdoms. Go rampa argues for the disunity between the two cognitive resources, so that a buddha is said to have only ultimate or non-conceptual wisdom.

In spite of vast differences regarding their treatments of conventional truth, of the cognitive resources and of the criterion of objects of negation, Tsong khapa and Go rampa agree on the way ultimate truth is realised by the non-conceptual wisdom corresponding to it. They both agree that ultimate truth is seen by way of not seeing it. But what does this latter statement actually mean? In Tsong khapa's view, the phrase 'seeing by way of not seeing it' refers to the same idea as that expressed in the claim: "without seeing constitutes the noble seeing".¹³ The phrase 'seeing it by way of not

seeing it' is not a contradictory statement, for in Tsong khapa's view, the Prāsaṅgikas "do not accept seeing nothing as seeing [the ultimate reality]".¹⁴ For Tsong khapa, the terms 'seeing' and 'not seeing', used within the same phrase, imply two different objects of reference, and for this reason, Tsong khapa argues that "not seeing conceptual elaborations (*spros pa, prapañca*) is itself posited as seeing the transcendence of conceptual categories (*spros bral, aprapañca*)".¹⁵ The term 'seeing' has 'transcendence of the conceptual elaborations' (*spros dral, aprapañca*) as its referent, while the term 'not seeing' has 'conceptual categories' (*spros pa, prapañca*) as its referent. In other words, that which is seen is the empty mode of being of phenomena, while that which is not seen is the conventional mode of existence of those phenomena. Since the phrases 'seen' and 'not seen' take different objects (the 'it' to which they refer is equivocal), so the phrase 'seeing it by way of not seeing it' need not be self-contradictory. It is an appropriate way to describe how ultimate truth is presented to its cognising consciousness. Go rampa agrees with this latter point.¹⁶ Although he does not elaborate much on the phrase, Go rampa does hold that a mode of realising ultimate reality is by way of not seeing the dualistic appearances. On Go rampa's account, the terms 'seeing' and 'not seeing' also take different referents. 'Seeing' refers to 'ultimate reality' or the 'transcendence of conceptual categories', while 'not seeing' refers to 'empirical reality' or 'conceptual categories'.

Inasmuch as they both hold that ultimate truth is 'seen by way of not seeing it', and that the terms 'seen' and 'not seen' each have a different referent, so Tsong khapa and Go rampa agree. We should not assume, however, that the two thinkers are in total agreement as to what the terms 'seen' and 'not seen' imply. The truth is that there is a clear difference in the way Tsong khapa and Go rampa each understand the terms and phrases at issue. The point of disagreement between the two accounts, as will be seen below, concerns what it is in which 'seeing it by way of not seeing it' is taken to consist. The question is: does 'seeing the ultimate by way of not seeing it' constitute an engagement with a particular cognitive content, or does it constitute simply the engagement with a total absence—is 'seeing it by way of not seeing it' a contentless wisdom?

2. Transcendental epistemology

Since 'seeing ultimate truth by way of not seeing' also means 'transcending of conceptual elaboration', the distinctions between Tsong khapa and Go rampa's positions regarding the way in which ultimate truth is realised can be further articulated by considering the criterion that determines the 'transcendence of conceptual elaboration'. At issue here are a number of questions including the question whether the transcendence of conceptual elaboration calls for a total obliteration of conceptual categories?—Is there

perhaps a way of transcending conceptual elaborations without actually eliminating them?

2.1. Proliferation of 'conceptual elaboration' (*prapañca*)

But first let us find out what 'conceptual elaboration' really is. 'Conceptual elaboration' is indeed a *rough* translation¹⁷ of the Sanskrit term *prapañca* (Pāli *papañca*, Tib. *spros pa*). A precise English equivalent for the term is very hard to find. This is partly because the concept expressed by the term *prapañca* is totally foreign to the English-speaking world and partly, as Thanissaro Bhikkhu suggests, because none of the early texts in the Buddhist Canon offers a clear and a precise definition of what the word *prapañca* means.¹⁸ However, the Buddhist Canon "does give a clear analysis of how *papañca* arises, how it leads to conflict, and how it can be ended. In the final analysis," as Thanissaro Bhikkhu rightly points out "these are the questions that matter—more than the precise definition of terms".¹⁹

In some of his discourses, the Buddha 'maps out' the causal process that gives rise to *prapañca* and that eventually leads to conflict.²⁰ In the *Sakka-pañha Sutta* [DN 21], the mapping reads like this: *The perceptions and categories of papañca leads to thinking, and thinking leads to desire, desire in turn leads to dear and not dear, to envy and stinginess, to rivalry and hostility.* In the *Kalaha-vivāda Sutta* [Sn. IV.11] the mapping reads: *perception leads to the categories of papañca*

(or) perception leads to mentality and materiality, mentality and materiality lead to contact with the world, the contact with the world in turn leads to appealing and unappealing, to desire, to dear and not dear, to divisiveness, quarrels, disputes, lamentation, sorrow and so forth. In the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta* [MN 18], the causal chain is mapped thus: contact leads to feeling, feeling leads to perception, the perception in turn leads to thinking, to perceptions and categories of *papañca*. This third 'mapping' is more formally restated in the *sutta* as: "Depending on eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises (similarly with the rest of six consciousnesses). The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition, there is feeling. What one feels, one perceives. What one perceives, one thinks about. What one thinks about, one *papañces*".²¹

In spite of the variation in some details, the *suttas* all depict the essential basis that gives rise to the proliferation of *prapañcas*. Although part of a larger causal nexus, it is the unskilful habit of the mind called *prapañca* that is taken to lie at the heart of all conflicts both within and without. *Prapañca* is essentially the blind tendency of the mind to proliferate that issues from the sense of 'self'. *Prapañca* thereby cloaks the normal processes of cognition, permeating thought patterns with distortion and error. Consequently, phenomena present themselves to cognition in modes contradictory to their actual mode of being—they appear substantial, self-subsistent, isolated units

locked up in themselves, even, at times, having an immutable core of identity (an 'essential nature') intrinsic to themselves.

The sphere in which the illusion of *prapañca* is most immediately felt is the experiential domain—that is, the sphere of psychophysical aggregates. The experiential domain is putatively divided into two elements—a cognitive or subjective element comprised of consciousness and its adjuncts, and a cognised or objective element comprised of cognitive data. Although the subjective and objective elements are interlocking and mutually dependent, the operation of *prapañca* leads to the conceptual bifurcation of those elements and their reduction to the dichotomy of subject and object. Just as the cognitive element is split off from the nexus of experiential events, and is erroneously conceived as a 'subject' distinct from the cognitive act itself, so also the objective element is conceived as the external world of 'objects' and as equally distinct from the nexus of experiential events. This cognitive error leads consciousness to view itself as a persisting ego standing against the world of changing phenomena—this solidification of the ego engenders the idea of the self as a substantial and independently existing entity. Thanissaro Bhikkhus thus suggests "that the root of the categories of *papañca* is the perception, "I am thinker".²² He further argues that from such self-reflective elaboration (in which one constructs a 'self' corresponding to the 'I') a number of categories can be derived: categories of 'being' and 'not-being', of

‘me’ and ‘not me’, of mine’ and ‘not mine’, of ‘doer’ and ‘done to’, of ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’.²³

Once the ego is solidified through the processes of *prapañca*, it constantly seeks self-affirmation and self-aggrandisement. Yet because the ego is an utter illusion, utterly empty, utterly void, so the appearance of selfhood itself generates a nagging sense of insufficiency—the ego cannot be adequate to that which it projects itself as being. Consequently, on both emotional and intellectual fronts, the ego experiences an aching sense of incompleteness, an inner lacking requiring a perpetual filling, and the lurking suspicion of an ultimate lack of identity. The result is an inner disquietude and a chronic anxiety that is expressed in a compulsion to build and to fortify the sense of self-identity and self-substantiality. This process leads to greed, to desire, to relentless craving—for pleasure, wealth, power and fame—all as a means to satisfy the need for self-security. In turn, this results in hatred, selfishness, and violence. Thus, as the *Madhupindika Sutta* [MN 18] points out, through the process of *prapañca*, the agent becomes a victim of his own ignorance and misconception: “Based on what a person *papañcises*, the perception and categories of *papañca* assail him/her with regard to past, present and future forms cognisable via the eye (as with the remaining senses)”.²⁴

In summarising how the unskilful habit of *prapañca* victimises the agent, Thanissaro Bhikkhu writes: “once one’s self becomes a thing under the rubric

of these categories, it is impossible not to be assailed by the perception and categories derived from these basic distinctions".²⁵ When the sense of self-identification arises in relation to experiences, then based on the feelings arising from sensory contact, obviously some feelings will seem appealing—worth getting for the self—and others will seem unappealing—worth pushing away. "From this there grows desire, which comes into conflict with desires of others who are also engaging in *papañca*. This is how inner complications (*papañca*) breeds external contention".²⁶ This analysis of the process of the proliferation of *prapañca* and the way in which it victimises the agent is largely accepted by both Tsong khapa and Go rampa. Where they part company is on the characterisation of the nature of *papañca* and the way in which the proliferation of the categories of *prapañca* is brought to an end.

As in the *suttas* set out above, Tsong khapa advances the view that *prapañca* is a reifying cognitive process that originates in habitual clinging to the substantiality and essences of things:

[Interlocutor]: By means of ending what leads to the end of defilements? [Response]: Reproductive karma that gives birth in saṃsāra arises from defilements. Although, defilements in themselves, are not self-evidently existent, they arise from the erroneous conceptions engaging with the false notions such as 'appealing' and 'not-appealing'. The erroneous conceptions engaging with the false notions, in turn arise from the beginningless habituations with the

grasping to true existence (i.e. essence) in relation to the diverse categories of *prapañca*. Included in them are cognitions and cognised objects, expressions and expressed, jars and mattresses, male and female, gain and loss, etc. The *prapañca*, which grasps to the true existence of these things is possible to be eradicated by means of the practical orientations directed towards seeing the emptiness of those things.²⁷

Ultimate wisdom is the only means by which the cognitive distortions perpetuated by *prapañca* can be eradicated, and so Tsong khapa and Go rampa both approach the categories of *prapañca* from the vantage point of this wisdom rather than from any more generalised perspective. Consequently, Tsong khapa takes *prapañca* to mean not only the categories that are conceptually reified through the assumption of the existence of essences (the categories that are generally classified as the objects of negation), but he argues that “the categories of appearances are also included in *prapañca* in this context [the vantage point of ultimate wisdom]”.²⁸ Likewise, Go rampa argues that “far from being the only true existent entity or a negative entity, *prapañca* includes all signs of phenomena, both positive or negative that provoke mental engagements and distractions”.²⁹ As Georges Dreyfus puts it “by elaboration [*prapañca*], Go rampa means more than holding to things as really existing or understanding emptiness to imply a commitment to a positive entity. He

means all signs, positive or negative, through which objects can be conceptualised".³⁰

As has so often been the case in the discussion so far, the initial agreement between Tsong khapa and Go rampa in their characterisations of *prapañca* is underlain by a deeper level of disagreement. On the one hand, Tsong khapa offers two contextually dependent characterisations of *prapañca*. One emphasises an epistemic process—the mental tendency to ‘essentialise’ that leads to the proliferation of the categories of *prapañca*—the other emphasises something more ontological—the contents or categories of *prapañca* as grasped from the transcendental vantage point. Go rampa, on the other hand, offers only one characterisation of *prapañca* that places the emphasis solely on the contents of *prapañca*. The characterisation of *prapañca* as an epistemic process allows Tsong khapa to argue that conventional phenomena are not the objects of negation, the characterisation of *prapañca* in terms of its categories or contents allows Go rampa to argue that the objects of negation comprise all conventional phenomena.

2.2. Transcending ‘conceptual elaborations’

The emergence of disagreement between Tsong khapa and Go rampa on the understanding of *prapañca* becomes clearer as we enter the second phase of the analysis, namely, the analysis of the transcendence of *prapañca*. Since, as

we noted above, Tsong khapa approaches the issue of *prapañca* from the perspective of ultimate wisdom, so he classifies all conventional appearances as part of the categories of *prapañca*. In Tsong khapa's view, however, the transcendence of the categories of *prapañca* cannot be equated with "the absence of the *prapañca* of appearances".³¹ Tsong khapa argues instead that "transcendence of the categories of *prapañca* should be understood as a dissolution of all dualistic appearances from the vantage point of the direct perception of things as they really are".³²

Although it is not entirely without ontological implications, Tsong khapa does not view the transcendence of the categories of *prapañca* as implying metaphysical transcendence. What is transcended in the transcendence of *prapañca* is thus, for Tsong khapa, the conventional understanding that is associated with the dualistic appearance of things—but this does not entail the ontological transcendence. That this is so follows from Tsong khapa's prior commitment to a transcendental epistemological perspective as that on the basis of which the essenceless, relational and contingent nature of phenomena is established. In spite of the fact that the cognitive agent experiences a total transcendence of the categories of *prapañca* in the realisation of ultimate truth during meditative equipoise, Tsong khapa takes this experience of transcendence to operate strictly within the epistemic domain and so within the structure of the psychophysical aggregates which

are not themselves transcended or dissolved. It is thus that the notion of transcending the categories of *prapañca* must not be construed as a form of metaphysical transcendence.

The characterisation of *prapañca* offered by Go rampa, however, has strong metaphysical implications. “*Prapañca*”, says Go rampa, “is the characteristic feature of causally effective things. The *Tathāgata*, however is not a thing, hence the categories of *prapañca* do not apply to it. Therefore *Tathāgata* is transcendent of *prapañca*”.³³ Go rampa makes it very clear that just as he does not regard *prapañca* as merely a cognitive process, neither is the transcendence of *prapañca* merely epistemic in character. *Prapañca* is constitutive of all causally effective phenomena, and so the transcendence of the categories of *prapañca* means the transcendence of *all* empirical phenomena, including the empirical consciousness. Thus the transcendence at issue in the transcendence of *prapañca* is a transcendence of the very structures that appear to be constitutive of cognition, and so a transcendence, one might say, even of cognition itself (or at least of cognition as it is part of the system of conventional appearances).

Like Go rampa, many of his traditional allies—Red mda’ ba,³⁴ Mi pham,³⁵ Rong ston,³⁶ Śākya mChog ldan,³⁷ Mi skyod rDo rje,³⁸ dGe ’dun Chos ’phel³⁹—also treat *prapañca* as simply synonymous with the system of conventional truth and pursue no distinction whatsoever between the

structures of understanding that are themselves part of the system of conventional truth (the fact of understanding as itself a conventional phenomenon) and the understanding of the structures of that system of conventionalities (understanding of the fact of the conventionality of phenomena). In equating *prapañcas* with the entire system of conventionalities without qualification, they also equate the entire system of conventionalities with ignorance and the effects of ignorance. Thus they all agree, like Go rampa, that *prapañcas* such as the impressions of existence and nonexistence appear so long as metaphysical transcendence is not achieved.⁴⁰

There is no doubt that Tsong khapa and Go rampa differ markedly in their understanding of what the transcendence of the categories of *prapañca* must entail. For Go rampa, it is contradictory to hold that one can retain any connections with the conventional world while at the same time achieving transcendence from the categories of *prapañca*—any relation with the conventional world is seen as having detrimental affects on the pursuit of the soteriological goal. The transcendence of the categories of *prapañca* means, therefore, the achievement of total ontological and epistemological separation from the conventional world.⁴¹ Given Go rampa's insistence on the primacy of ultimate truth and ultimate wisdom over conventional truth and empirical wisdom, his insistence on the need for metaphysical transcendence is by no means surprising—it is consistent with his overall soteriological agenda. In

contrast, Tsong khapa's philosophy is not committed to maintaining the primacy of ultimate truth and ultimate wisdom over conventional truth and empirical wisdom—the two truths and their cognitive counterparts are seen as interdependent and mutually entailing, and this holds true even in the case of transcendental epistemology. In Tsong khapa's view, the mutual interconnection of the two truths and the coordination between the two cognitions is not severed even in the process of the transcendence of the categories of *prapañca*. "Because the characteristic of reality and the *prapañca* of the characterised appearances are mutually inseparable, the existence of ultimate truth would be impossible [without the characterised objects as its basis]", argues Tsong khapa.⁴² Tsong khapa's insistence on the epistemic rather than metaphysical character of the transcendence at issue is thus clearly consistent with his emphasis on the unity between the two truths. Yet while the consistency of their respective positions may be evident, it nevertheless still remains for us to provide a fuller account of the considerations that underlie the radically different accounts of transcendence adopted by Tsong khapa and Go rampa.

The issues at stake here come into sharpest relief when we consider the way in which the transcendence of the categories of *prapañca* applies to the *prapañcas* of personal identity—the five psychophysical aggregates. In Go rampa's transcendental epistemology, the transcendence of the categories of

prapañca requires a total elimination of all five psychophysical aggregates since those aggregates are unequivocally identified with the categories of *prapañca*. The transcendental wisdom that is arrived at through the transcendence of the categories of *prapañca* is ontologically independent of the conventionalities of the five psychophysical aggregates and occurs only after the severance of every connection with conventional knowledge. The dissolution of those aggregates is therefore a necessary condition for the achievement of transcendental wisdom and does not undermine it. In Tsongkhapa's transcendental epistemology, on other hand, the transcendence of the *prapañcas* of personal identity must be achieved by the transcendental wisdom *within* the framework of the *prapañcas* of personal identity—namely, within one's five psychophysical aggregates. The transcendence of the *prapañcas* of personal identity is soteriologically significant only if it is personally experienced within the bound of one's psychophysical aggregates, but such transcendence must, therefore, be epistemic and cannot entail complete metaphysical transcendence of conventionalities or their total dissolution.

On the view espoused by Tsongkhapa, ultimate wisdom (non conceptual wisdom or ultimately valid cognition) is described as 'transcendental wisdom' in the sense that it is directed to the transcendental sphere—towards supramundane or unconditioned nirvāṇa—but it is

nevertheless *mundane* in terms of its scope and its nature. Transcendental wisdom still operates entirely within the range of the conditioned world—it is itself dependently arisen and does not imply a shift to a metaphysically unconditioned sphere. Only reality as it is given within their own five aggregates is accessible to yogis and knowable directly through their personal experience. The transcendence of the categories of *prapañcas* is directed towards just such direct, personal, transcendental wisdom. It is this wisdom, according to Tsong khapa, that liberates beings from the obsession with conceptual elaborations such as those associated with the notions of an independent and substantial self—‘I’, ‘Mine’, ‘Me’.

The true and essential characteristic of transcendental knowledge thus consists in a precise understanding of the conditioned world itself. In Bhikkhu Bodhi’s words: “though the realisation of the unconditioned requires a turning away from the conditioned, it must be emphasised that this realisation is achieved precisely through the understanding of the conditioned”.⁴³ Whereas Go rampa argues that a practitioner must break off all ties with the conditioned world in order to attain unconditioned nirvāṇa, Tsong khapa claims that the practitioner must view things as they are by means of direct awareness. This idea is again nicely captured by Bhikkhu Bodhi: “*nibbāna* cannot be reached by backing off from a direct confrontation with saṃsāra to lose oneself in a blissful oblivion of the world”.⁴⁴

Emphasising exactly the same point, Nāgājuna also claims that “saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are not distinct. The understanding of saṃsāra is itself posited as nirvāṇa” [6].⁴⁵

It is crucial for Tsong khapa to emphasise the connection between transcendental and empirical wisdom, and therefore also the connection between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, since it is on this basis that Tsong khapa argues that transcendental knowledge is equivalent to the knowledge of phenomena as dependently arisen. Hence he argues that “dependently arisen, i.e. reality in its true nature, as seen by an *ārya*, is free from all categories of *prapañca* such as the expression and the expressed objects, definitions and defined objects and the like”.⁴⁶ In other words, as Bhikkhu Bodhi puts it, “the path to liberation is a path of understanding, of comprehension and transcendence, not of escapism or emotional self-indulgence. Nibbāna can only be attained by turning one’s gaze towards saṃsāra, and scrutinising it in all its starkness”.⁴⁷

So the transcendence of the categories of *prapañca* need not and does not threaten the interlocking relationship between the two truths. The transcendental experience remains firmly grounded in empirical reality, while also allowing for epistemic transcendence—transcendental wisdom, underpinned by right-view and by firm ethical foundations, directs the mind upon the unconditioned so as to penetrate and cut through all the categories

of *prapañca*. “By penetrating the conditioned to its very bottom and most universal features, the yogi passes through the door leading out of the conditioned to the supreme security of the unconditioned”, as Bhikkhu Bodhi puts it.⁴⁸ In this manner, transcendental wisdom effectively transcends the rigidity and the corporeality of the categories of *prapañca*.

In spite of the fact that transcendental wisdom destroys the mental tendencies for the proliferation of *prapañca*, such wisdom nevertheless leaves the categories of *prapañca* intact. Just as a lamp simultaneously burns the wick, dispels the darkness, creates light, and consumes the oil, so transcendental wisdom simultaneously understands things as they are, abandons ignorance and the obsessions to proliferate *prapañcas*, realises the nirvāṇa, and develops the path to liberation. The key to transcendental knowledge, therefore, lies in the wisdom capable of penetrating the conceptual world—penetrating the five psychophysical aggregates of the knower. Such wisdom involves a direct experience that operates within the confines of one’s own five psychophysical aggregates and yet ‘sees through’ those aggregates. As Bhikkhu Bodhi points out, “the path to *nibbāna* lies through the understanding of *saṃsāra*⁴⁹ for the reason that the experiential realisation of the unconditioned emerges from a prior penetration of the fundamental nature of the conditioned, without which it is impossible”.⁵⁰

Go rampa's transcendental epistemology, as we have seen, is geared towards the postulation of metaphysical transcendence. This consequently leads him to argue in favour of the absolute existence of the transcendental Tathāgata, the latter itself being taken as identical with transcendental wisdom,⁵¹ while he also insists on the necessity of the absolute elimination of all the categories of *prapañca*—of the entire conventional system. On the other hand, while Tsong khapa does argue in favour of epistemic transcendence, he also insists that transcendental knowledge is not based in the actual elimination of all conceptual categories. As far as he is concerned, "the transcendence of conceptual categories means dissolving all the categories of *prapañca*—dualistic appearances—from the vantage point of the transcendental wisdom capable of directly realising ultimate reality".⁵² Once transcendental knowledge is achieved, the meditator still makes use of dualities in respect of certain practicalities—to distinguish between, for instance, skilful and unskilful action, afflictions and non-afflictions—and yet the habitual tendency to proliferation of *prapañca* ceases since the meditator has become aware of the fact that such dualities are part of ongoing processes, rather than inherently persisting discrete entities.

The main thrust of the arguments advanced by Go rampa in favour of his alternative transcendental position derives from his emphasis on the two truths, and their cognitive counterparts, as completely distinct from one

another which are hierarchically related. Since ultimate truth, and transcendental wisdom along with it, are viewed as ontologically and epistemologically independent of their conventional counterparts, so it follows directly, on Go rampa's account, they must also be *completely* transcendent of those counterparts—both epistemically *and* ontologically. It is Tsong khapa's contrasting emphasis on the unity of the two truths that is the basis for his insistence on the merely epistemic character of the transcendence associated with ultimate truth and transcendental wisdom. The unity of the two truths, and the modes of understanding associated with them, thus cannot be violated even at the climax of the transcendental experience. As Bhikkhu Bodhi puts it, "the understanding of the conditioned and the realisation of the unconditioned are found to lock together in direct connection",⁵³ and he goes on, "this principle—that the understanding of the conditioned is the way to the unconditioned—holds true not only in the general sense...but in a deeper, more philosophical sense as well".⁵⁴ The two modes of understanding are thus viewed by Tsong khapa as mutually entailing in the same way as are the two truths themselves. In conclusion, then, it may be said that while Go rampa mobilises his transcendental epistemology so as to enable the formulation of a non-duality that is metaphysical, Tsong khapa mobilises his transcendental epistemology so as to enable the formulation of a non-duality that is merely epistemic. At this

point, however, the idea of non-duality itself comes to the fore and it is to this that we must turn in the next section.

3. Non-dual epistemology

Since the two Tibetan Prāsaṅgikas agree that the direct personal realisation of ultimate truth requires the transcendence of all conceptual elaborations (*prapañca*), which is in turn dependent on the attainment of what is known as ‘non-dual knowledge,’ so a detailed analysis of the status of non-duality is crucial to our discussion. This analysis will involve the examination of a number of issues including: how and when the non-dual state is attained; whether the non-duality at issue is epistemic or metaphysical; and what is implied by the attainment of the non-dual state—particularly in relation to the dichotomy of subject and object.

So far as Tsong khapa is concerned, the non-dualistic personal realisation of ultimate truth is an epistemic event rather than a metaphysical process. In non-dualistic realisation, as Tsong khapa understands matters, it is possible for non-dualistic realisation to be achieved, and yet the apprehending consciousness—transcendental wisdom—is able to retain its ontological distinctness as subject, while the cognitive sphere—ultimate reality—is likewise able to retain its ontological distinctness as object. Go rampa argues, however, that non-dualistic personal realisation is a process

geared towards the formation of a single metaphysical reality—a total integration and unification of subjectivity and objectivity. Only such a complete integration, according to Go rampa, resolves the problems pertaining to duality. Thus, while Tsong khapa and Go rampa agree superficially that, from the standpoint of non-dual wisdom,⁵⁵ the meditator *experiences* a total dissolution of even the subtle duality between subjective sector and objective sector, they disagree on the implications of this non-dualistic experience. The achievement of non-dualistic wisdom is not equivalent, according to Tsong khapa, to the cessation of cognitive activity, whereas, for Go rampa, it is equivalent to such cessation.

Tsong khapa's descriptive account of the way in which the meditator arrives at the state of non-dualistic understanding proceeds as follows. A concerned cognitive agent experiences the fusion between subjectivity and objectivity—subjectivity and objectivity refer here, not to self and outside world, but rather to elements within the structure of the meditator's own psychophysical aggregates. The meditator remains introspective, sometimes with eyes closed, not interacting with the outside world, but the outside world as such does not disappear. What occurs in this experience of subjective-objective fusion is instead a total cessation of the dualities between subject 'I' and object 'Mine', between 'thinker' and 'thought', between 'feeler' and 'feelings', between 'mind' and 'body', between 'seeing' and 'seen' and so

forth.⁵⁶ To begin with, a meditator perceives, for instance, that in each act of seeing, two factors are always present, the object seen and the mental state of seeing it. While each single instance of the act of seeing involves dissolution and vanishing, the object seen and the act of seeing actually consist of numerous physical and mental processes that are seen to dissolve serially and successively.⁵⁷ Eventually, the meditator also notices the dissolution of the dissolution itself—in other words, the meditator first realises the fluctuating and transitory character of the five aggregates, this realisation is then followed by the further realisation of the aggregates as empty and selfless, and finally by the realisation of the emptiness of even the empty and selfless phenomena. Non-dual knowledge is thus arrived at, in Tsong khapa's view, through the direct personal experience of seeing or noticing truths within the framework of one's own aggregates, rather than through being convinced of the truth of certain opinions through abstract rational argument or persuasion. Since the process at issue here is a cognitive experience that operates entirely within the domain of one's own psychophysical aggregates, so it is an *epistemic* non-duality, but not a *metaphysical* non-duality.

This is how, according to Tsong khapa, an *ārya*, as a cognitive agent, has a direct non-conceptual and a non-dualistic access to the transcendental nature of his own five psychophysical aggregates during the meditative equipoise. In the wake of the meditative equipoise, an *ārya* engages with

dualistic worldly activities such as taking part in philosophical discourse, practising different social conventions and so on. The *ārya* will thus employ particular socio-linguistic conceptions, but since the *ārya* has eradicated all reifying tendencies, so even these worldly dualistic cognitive engagements will be seen as consistent with non-dualistic wisdom. Both non-dualistic and dualistic wisdoms, especially in the case of a buddha are, Tsong khapa argues, fully commensurable.

Go rampa's version of non-duality stands in direct opposition to Tsong khapa's. As far as Go rampa is concerned, any dichotomy is inconsistent with non-duality and so with the idea of non-dual knowledge. The key to the attainment of non-dual knowledge is the eschewal of the dichotomy between the objectivity of ultimate reality and the subjectivity of transcendental wisdom. In Go rampa's view, it is not possible to achieve non-duality so long as the dichotomy between subjective and objective persists. The fundamental criterion of Go rampa's non-duality is thus a complete metaphysical oneness requiring a total fusion of transcendental wisdom with ultimate reality. They become a unified entity, which he interchangeably describes as 'transcendental wisdom', 'Buddha' '*Tathāgata*', 'ultimate truth', or 'ultimate reality' (*dhe kho na nyid*). "Because one has realised emptiness and attained a perfect orientation with it", says Go rampa, "the adventitious stains wear out. Eventually the cognition itself becomes an undefiled cognitive sphere. This

itself is the ultimate Buddha, who is adorned with the perfections of abandonment and realisation".⁵⁸ From this point onwards, "ultimate reality, empirical reality and subjective wisdom—all three lose their contradistinctions".⁵⁹

Go rampa argues that 'existence', 'nonexistence', 'both' and 'neither' constitute the four extreme conceptual elaborations. "Once they are simultaneously extirpated, the individuality of cognising mind and cognised reality ceases to exist".⁶⁰ He claims that "the cognising mind inseparably embraces the transcendence of conceptual elaboration as its object, and that itself is designated as ultimate truth".⁶¹ In other words, as Śākya mChog ldan puts it: "the actual cognitive sphere of the [non-dualistic] wisdom of the meditative equipoise directly realising emptiness is the wisdom itself".⁶² For both Go rampa and Śākya mChog ldan, then, "this wisdom is the ultimate truth. For it is the actual cognitive sphere of the wisdom of the meditative equipoise...This holds true because this wisdom is the direct personal wisdom".⁶³

The advocacy of such an absolute non-dual wisdom is not unique to Go rampa and Śākya mChog ldan. In spite of some minor differences, several Tibetan Prāsaṅgikas hold a similar view. Like Go rampa, Mi skyod rDo rje emphasises the synthesis between transcendental wisdom and ultimate truth. Mi skyod rDo rje does this by arguing that "there is neither separate ultimate

truth apart from the transcendental wisdom nor transcendental wisdom apart from the ultimate truth".⁶⁴ Mi pham, on the other hand, makes use of a more idealistic route to ascend to an absolute non-duality: "In the end, there are no external objects. It is evident that they are apparent due to the force of mental predisposition. All literatures that supposedly demonstrate the existence of external objects are provisional [descriptions of] their appearances".⁶⁵ Consequently, whatever is posited as existent, according to Mi pham, "is like horse or elephant appearing in the dream. When it is subjected to logical analyses, it finally boils down to the interdependent inner predispositions. And this is at the heart of Buddhist philosophy".⁶⁶ The climax of this absolute non-duality, for these thinkers, is the absolute realisation of transcendental wisdom and the complete collapse or dissolution of the entire conventional system. Identical with ultimate truth, transcendental wisdom survives as the as the one and only truth. Transcendental wisdom becomes timeless, absolute, and unaffected by change. Even the concept of time is no longer applicable since transcendental wisdom endures eternally—"it neither arises nor ceases", as Go rampa puts it.⁶⁷

Central to Go rampa's doctrine of non-duality are several of the key idealistic conceptions. Go rampa does not hesitate to impose⁶⁸ conceptions derived from Yogācāra or Vijñānavāda—such as that of *vijnapti-mātra* (*blos bzhaḡ tsam*), 'representation-only', or of *citta-mātra* (*sems tsam*) 'mere-

mind’—on Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka. He argues that the external world is a system of purely mental constructs and claims that the five sensory consciousnesses perceiving the phenomenal world arise from the ‘foundational consciousness’ called *ālayavijñāna* (*kun gzhi rnam shes*)—literally, it means ‘storehouse consciousness’. This latter idea constitutes one of the fundamental doctrines of Yogācāra Idealism. *Ālayavijñāna* is characterised as devoid of ‘purposive activity’, ‘self-luminous’ and ‘auto-cognisant’, and is seen as the ‘basis of all sensory activities’—the storehouse of all past karmic seeds, adventitious potential defilements and intrinsically pure virtues. *Ālayavijñāna* is thus regarded as the ‘fundamental root’ or more philosophically, the ‘foundational root’ of both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. This consciousness is, according to both Go rampa and the proponents of Yogācāra Idealism, transcendent of the dualism of ‘subject’ and ‘object’, ‘existence’ and ‘nonexistence’, ‘death’ and ‘birth’, ‘purity’ and ‘defilements’, ‘arising’ and ‘cessation’, and is described as the *Dharma-dhātu*, or nirvāṇa, or *tathāgata-garbha*.

In defending the conception of the ‘fundamental root,’ Sogyal Rinpoche for example writes: “There is the very nature of mind, its innermost essence, which is absolutely and always untouched by change or death. At present it is hidden within our own mind, our *sems*, enveloped and obscured by the mental scurry of our thoughts and emotions”,⁶⁹ but, he goes on, “just as

clouds can be shifted by a strong gust of wind to reveal the shining sun and wide-open sky, so, under certain special circumstances, some inspiration may uncover for us glimpses of this nature of mind".⁷⁰ Sogyal Rinpoche also explains that, in spite of having varying depths and degrees, these glimpses each bring some light of understanding, meaning and freedom. "This is because the nature of mind is the very root itself of understanding. In Tibetan we call it *Rigpa*, a primordial, pure, pristine awareness that is at once intelligent, cognisant, radiant, and always awake. It could be said to be the knowledge of knowledge itself".⁷¹

Yet the conception of the 'fundamental root' has not gone unchallenged, and perhaps the most significant challenge comes directly from the Buddha himself in the very first *sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*—the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta*. This *sutta* is, according to Thanissaro Bhikkhu (and as indicated in its commentary), the Buddha's response to a particular school of Brahmanical thought developing in his time—the classical Sāṃkya, which posited the 'root' as an abstract principle out of which all things are said to have emanated and that was immanent in all things.⁷² This *sutta* is clearly one of the Buddha's critiques of the idea of a 'fundamental root'. As Thanissaro Bhikkhu rightly suggests, "any teaching that follows these lines would be subjected to the same criticism that the Buddha directed against the monks who first heard this discourse".⁷³ Tibetan metaphysicians have a common

tendency to create systems of Buddhist metaphysics in which the experience of emptiness, the unconditioned, the *Dharma-realm*, the *Dharma-body*, *Buddha-nature*, *Rigpa*, *ālayavijñāna*, etc., is said to function as the ground of being from which the ‘All’—the entirety of our sensory and mental experience—arises and to which it returns. Such metaphysical systems seem strikingly parallel to classical Sāṃkhya thought—wherein the common root is accepted as constituting *prakṛti* (matter) and *puruṣa* (consciousness).

First, in the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta*, the Buddha expressly attacks the core of the abstract notion of the ‘fundamental root’ mocking the person who advocates such a view “as an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person”:

There is the case, monks, where an uninstructed run-of-the-mill person—who has no regard for nobles, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma; who has no regard for men of integrity, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma—perceives earth as earth. Perceiving earth as earth, he conceives [things] about earth, he conceives [things] in earth, he conceives [things] coming out of earth, he conceives earth as ‘mine,’ he delights in earth. Why is that? Because he has not comprehended it, I tell you...He perceives *nibbāna* as *nibbāna*. Perceiving *nibbāna* as *nibbāna*, he conceives things about *nibbāna*, he conceives things in *nibbāna*, he conceives things coming out of *nibbāna*, he conceives *nibbāna* as ‘Mine,’ he delights in *nibbāna*. Why is that? Because he has not comprehended it, I tell you [*Mūlapariyāya Sutta*, MN 1].⁷⁴

Second, the Buddha instructs the trainees to the effect that, if they are keen to properly understand things as they really are, they should avoid adopting such a view and should avoid conceiving *nirvāṇa* and the like as the root:

A monk who is a trainee—yearning for the unexcelled relief from bondage, his aspirations as yet unfulfilled—directly knows earth as earth. Directly knowing earth as earth, let him not conceive things about earth, let him not conceive things in earth, let him not conceive things coming out of earth, let him not conceive earth as ‘mine,’ let him not delight in earth. Why is that? So that he may comprehend it...He directly knows *nibbāna* as *nibbāna*. Directly knowing *nibbāna* as *nibbāna*, let him not conceive things about *nibbāna*, let him not conceive things in *nibbāna*, let him not conceive things coming out of *nibbāna*, let him not conceive *nibbāna* as ‘mine,’ let him not delight in *nibbāna*. Why is that? So that he may comprehend it [*Mūlapariyāya Sutta*, MN 1].⁷⁵

Third, the Buddha rejects the idea of the ‘fundamental root’ on the ground that it is not verified by the wisdom of fully liberated beings. He explains how a fully liberated person, an *arhat*, directly knows reality without conceiving the root. Moreover, a careful reading of the *sutta* also reveals that the Buddha takes the idea of the ‘fundamental root’ to be a consequence of conceptual fraud and reification and as totally without direct perceptual foundation. The Buddha stresses that the *arhats* directly perceive “*nirvāṇa* as *nirvāṇa*”, and indicates that they strictly do not conceive “*nirvāṇa* as the primordial ground of other phenomena”:

A monk who is a Worthy One, devoid of mental defilements—who has attained completion, finished the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, destroyed the fetters of becoming, and is released through right knowledge—directly knows earth as earth. Directly knowing earth as earth, he does not conceive things about earth, does not conceive things in earth, does not conceive things coming out of earth, does not conceive earth as ‘mine’, does not delight in earth. Why is that? Because he has comprehended it, I tell you...He directly knows *nibbāna* as *nibbāna*. Directly knowing *nibbāna* as *nibbāna*, he does not conceive things about *nibbāna*, does not conceive things in *nibbāna*, does not conceive things coming out of *nibbāna*, does not conceive *nibbāna* as ‘mine’, does not delight in *nibbāna*. Why is that? Because he has comprehended it, I tell you...Because, with the ending of passion, he is devoid of passion, I tell you...Because, with the ending of aversion, he is devoid of aversion, I tell you...Because, with the ending of delusion, he is devoid of delusions, I tell you...[*Mūlapariyāya Sutta*, MN 1].⁷⁶

Fourth, the Buddha rejects the ‘fundamental root’ on the ground that it is not verified by an enlightened wisdom. The Buddha explains that a fully enlightened being, a Tathāgata, directly sees phenomena as they are, and yet does not conceive nor perceive the fundamental root:

The Tathāgata—as worthy one, rightly self-awakened—directly knows as earth. Directly knowing earth as earth, he does not conceive things about earth, does not conceive things in earth, does not conceive things coming out of earth, does not conceive earth as ‘mine’, does not delight in earth. Why is that? Because the Tathāgata has comprehended it to the end, I tell you...He directly knows *nibbāna* as *nibbāna*. Directly knowing *nibbāna* as *nibbāna*, he does not conceive things about *nibbāna*, does not conceive things in *nibbāna*, does not conceive things coming

out of *nibbāna*, does not conceive *nibbāna* as 'mine', does not delight in *nibbāna*. Why is that? Because the Tathāgata has comprehended it to the end, I tell you....Because he has known that delight is the root of suffering and stress, that from coming-into-being there is birth, and that for what has come into being there is aging and death. Therefore, with the total ending, fading away, cessation, letting go, relinquishment of craving, the Tathāgata has totally awakened to the unexcelled right self-awakening, I tell you [*Mūlapariyāya Sutta*, MN 1].⁷⁷

It is hard indeed to imagine how Go rampa and like-minded thinkers could reconcile absolute idealism alone, let alone their idea of the 'fundamental root', with the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka. The words of both Candrakīrti and the Buddha make crystal clear how material and mental aggregates must be treated as having an equal status and as being mutually dependent. Candrakīrti argues, for example, that: "if form does not exist, then do not hold to the existence of mind; and if mind exist, then do not hold to the nonexistence of form" [VI:91].⁷⁸ Similarly the Buddha states: "The thought occurred to me, 'consciousness exists when what exists? From what as a requisite condition comes consciousness?' From my appropriate attention, there came the breakthrough of discernment: 'Consciousness exists when name and form exists. From name and form as requisite condition comes consciousness'" [*Nagara Sutta*, SN XII.65].⁷⁹ From Buddha's appropriate attention, there came the breakthrough of discernment: "'Consciousness does not exist when name and form does not exist. From the cessation of name and

form comes the cessation of consciousness" [*Nagara Sutta*, SN XII.65].⁸⁰ The Buddha elucidates the interdependence of mind and matter even more clearly by employing a famous metaphor—the 'sheaves of reeds'. He says that it is as if two sheaves of reeds were to stand leaning against one another: "In the same way, from name and form as a requisite condition comes consciousness, from consciousness as a requisite condition comes name and form" [*Naḷakalāpiyo Sutta*, SN XII.67].⁸¹ The sheaves of reeds are mutually supportive of each other, so that if one were to pull away either of those sheaves, the other would fall: "In the same way, from the cessation of name and form comes the cessation of consciousness, from the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name and form" [*Naḷakalāpiyo Sutta*, SN XII.67].⁸²

At this point we need to summarise the considerations set out above. We have seen that in the non-dualism postulated by Go rampa, the ultimate task of wisdom is to break through the diversified appearances in order to discover the unifying non-dual reality. This way of understanding the task of wisdom involves a clear metaphysical commitment to abolishing the validity of all conventional dualities including the duality between subject and object. In Lindtner's terms: "reality (*tattva*) is beyond all ontological and epistemological dualities (*dvaya*), while the empirical world of origination, destruction, and so forth is illusory—due merely to ignorance (*avidyā*)".⁸³ By

using the epistemology of non-duality, Go rampa argues for a metaphysics of non-duality. As we shall notice in the next section, the formulation of his metaphysical non-duality reaches its culmination with Go rampa's proposition of 'nothingness' in place of 'emptiness'. As opposed to the non-dual metaphysical doctrine of Go rampa, however, is Tsong khapa's idea of an epistemic non-duality. By arguing that the consummation of the profound and complete non-dual state need not be bought at the price of losing the conventional distinctions, Tsong khapa holds that even the highest level of wisdom preserves duality and diversity. He argues that Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka draws our attention to empirical dualities—among them the duality of morality and immorality—and takes them as the indispensable basis for any honest search for liberating wisdom. To put the point in Bhikkhu Bodhi's words: "It is precisely these antitheses—of good and evil, suffering and happiness, wisdom and ignorance—that make the quest for the enlightenment and deliverance such a vitally crucial concern".⁸⁴ At the summit of these pairs of opposites stands the duality of the conditioned and the unconditioned: saṃsāra, wherein all phenomena are impermanent, subject to change, and liable to suffering, and nirvāṇa, the state of final freedom. Although nirvāṇa is definitely presented as ultimate reality, and not merely as a moral or psychological state, "there is not the least insinuation", as Bhikkhu Bodhi points out, "that this reality is metaphysically

indistinguishable at some profound level from its manifest opposite, *saṃsāra*".⁸⁵ On the contrary, the Buddha's repeated advice is that "*saṃsāra* is the realm of suffering governed by greed, hatred, and delusion...while *nibbāna* is irreversible release from *saṃsāra*, to be attained by demolishing greed, hatred, and delusion".⁸⁶ It is clear then, that the conception of non-duality in Tsong khapa's sense takes it to be strictly an epistemic process. This view will be reinforced in the next section, wherein it will be shown that, for Tsong khapa, even non-dual knowledge is consistent with knowing phenomena as empty (*śūnya*, *stong pa*). It follows, therefore, that non-dual knowledge is equivalent to knowing phenomena as dependently arisen, and is therefore consistent with dual knowledge.

3.1. Seeing phenomena as 'nothing'

In the preceding discussions, it became clear that Go rampa takes transcendental wisdom to exist as an absolute and that he also holds that the attainment of this wisdom amounts to the realisation of non-dual reality. But the answer to at least one question remains unclear: Does transcendental wisdom involve any cognitive activity? That this question is important becomes evident when we consider the possible answers that may be advanced. If the answer is positive, so that transcendental wisdom, understood as 'seeing by way of not seeing', is indeed taken to involve a form of cognitive activity, then why should the 'seeing' involved in transcendental

wisdom be characterised as a 'not seeing'? If the answer is negative, so that transcendental wisdom, understood as 'seeing by way of not seeing', is taken not to involve any form of cognitive activity, then why is the 'not seeing' of transcendental wisdom characterised as a 'seeing'? To put matters slightly differently: either transcendental wisdom involves a form of cognition, in which case it requires a distinction between cogniser and that which is the object of cognition, or else there is no distinction between cogniser and the object of cognition, in which case transcendental wisdom is not a form of cognition.

Even among his closest allies, Go rampa's treatment of the transcendental nature of conceptual elaboration in a non-dual state is highly contentious. It depends upon two important moves: first, arguing that the transcendence of conceptual elaborations in a non-dual state is equivalent to engaging with an 'utter absence' or 'nothingness'; and second, arguing that the ultimate cognition does not depend upon a dichotomous relation between subject and object. Go rampa writes that "the transcendence of conceptual elaboration is equivalent to an utter absence of any established entity (*ci yang ma grub pa*)", but he also insists that "in order to ensure the realisation of that 'utter absence' per se by the devotees, the transcendence of conceptual elaboration is presented as an arbitrary model (*mtshan gzhir sgro btags nas bsnyad pa*) of ultimate truth".⁸⁷ According to this view "a model that actually

represents the characteristic [of ultimate truth] cannot exist".⁸⁸ However, for the benefit of devotees, "ultimate truth is said to have been provisionally presented by means of the threefold conventional fabrications—definition (*mtshan nyid, lakṣaṇa*), definiendum (*mtshon bya, lakṣman*) and the defined model (*mtshan gzhi, lakṣya*). In this sense alone ultimate truth can be treated as the counterpart of conventional truth".⁸⁹ It turns out, therefore, that ultimate truth is not an object of knowledge in the sense that it can become known to its cognising consciousness. It is just an utter absence of anything empirical.

In order to establish the non-dual character of ultimate cognition, Go rampa attempts to resolve the apparent dichotomy between transcendental wisdom (as the putative subjective element in such cognition) and emptiness (as the putative objective element):

[Interlocutor]: When you earlier defined the 'transcendence of conceptual elaboration,' you mentioned that it is free from all symbols of the expressions and the object of expression; object and subject; and negation and affirmation, here you appraised it. Is this not like describing the qualities of the sky-flower [i.e., a nonexistent entity] which are not possible to know?

[Go rampa]: Yes, [you are right. Talking about the transcendence of conceptual elaboration is exactly like describing the qualities of something that is nonexistent]. However, its description even in this context is not meant to suggest the existence of [duality] between the consciousness realising [the transcendence of conceptual elaboration] and its experienced object or an object to be experienced [in the non-dual state]. Because...the elimination of the entire conceptual

elaboration by ārya's non-conceptual wisdom is itself considered as the realisation of emptiness, or is merely expressed as seeing the truth. If any object either to be conceptualised or to be experienced were involved [in the non-dual state], at the best, it would be a universal or a thing [but not ultimate truth].⁹⁰

Given his commitment to a metaphysical non-duality, any subject-object duality is a problem for Go rampa. He is therefore determined to eliminate all possible dichotomies. In order to achieve this, he equates the status of apprehending objects with 'universals'. Here 'universal' does not have the usual sense of abstractness, but rather refers to the objects themselves. Go rampa therefore argues that if, in the non-dual state, there is an object to be either conceptualised or experienced, then "at the best it would be a 'universal' or a 'thing'". Since 'thing' or 'universal' cannot be an ultimate truth, 'emptiness', in Go rampa's sense, must mean the utter absence of empirical truth. In this way transcendental wisdom is undifferentiated from nothingness. This undifferentiated transcendental wisdom does indeed satisfy the definition of being 'non-dual' in the most complete sense—it is beyond all cognitive activities, both perceptual and conceptual. It would seem that so long as the cognitive activities between cognising subject and cognised object persist, so the mind must always remain caught up in perceptual or conceptual operations. Moreover, both thought and perception operate always within the domain of duality between subject and object. Since the persistence of such dualities constitute, in Go rampa's view,

obstacles to the achievement of the non-dual state, so, if that state is to be achieved, then those obstacles must be removed.

In the non-dual system advocated by Go rampa, there cannot even be any form of transcendental cognitive ‘content’ apart from transcendental cognition, since this would constitute a version of what is, for Go rampa, the highly problematic dichotomy between subject and object. Since the presence of any cognitive activity between subject and object threatens the achievement of non-duality, Go rampa insists that emptiness must be an utter absence—it cannot be an object of knowledge or a cognitive content, and non-dual wisdom must embrace it without any duality or dichotomy. By treating emptiness as an utter absence rather than a cognitive content, Go rampa effectively resolves the problem of the apparent dichotomy between the objectivity of ultimate reality and the subjectivity of transcendental wisdom. Thus what remains is an absolute, non-dual and transcendental subject.

The view that equates emptiness with an ‘utter absence’ is, once again, not a view that is unique to Go rampa. In fact sTag tsang,⁹¹ along with the modern Tibetan polemical writer dGe dun Chos ‘phel, explicitly endorses this view. dGe dun Chos ‘phel, for instance, argues that in the meditative equipoise there is no apprehended object whatsoever: “When it is fused with the appearance in the post-meditative equipoise (*rjes thob*, *prṣṭha-labdha*), the union is formed in between the nothingness during the meditative equipoise

and the appearances of something during the subsequent attainment".⁹² This is how "the meaning of the 'establishment of ultimately nothing' and the 'establishment of empirically something' should be understood".⁹³

This view that equates emptiness with nothingness, although it has many non-dGe lugs pa admirers, is vigorously challenged not only by numerous dGe lugs pa philosophers—such as Tsong khapa,⁹⁴ mKhas grub rJe,⁹⁵ and 'Jam dbyangs bZhad pa,⁹⁶ but also by several non-dGe lugs pa thinkers such as Sa paṇ,⁹⁷ Rong ston and Mi pham. In criticising the doctrine, Rong ston, for example, points out that the equation of 'seeing nothingness' with the 'non-dual state in the meditative equipoise' would entirely incapacitate the purgative potency of *vipaśyanā*—penetrating wisdom (literally, 'special insight'). Given the fact that the most important task of the wisdom of *vipaśyanā* is the eradication of latent defilements, this is a serious objection. If meditative equipoise were equivalent to seeing nothingness, "like a non-discerning meditative trance (*'dus shes med pa'i snyoms 'jug, asaṃjñatā-samāpatti*)", then meditative equipoise "would utterly lack the active penetrating insight of *vipaśyanā* (*lhag mthong*) seeing emptiness".⁹⁸ Moreover, if the equivalence of meditative equipoise with seeing nothingness was accepted, "even sleep, falling into coma etc., would equally purge [the latent defilements] since they also possess mere non-discernment".⁹⁹ In similar fashion, Mi pham joins Rong ston in challenging the equation of

‘seeing nothingness’ with the non-dual wisdom of meditative equipoise. While reinforcing Rong ston’s criticisms, Mi pham brands Go rampa’s view as quietism—a view, also attributed to the Chinese Hva-shang (¹⁰⁰ *ci yang yid la me byed pa’i lta ba*), that takes cognitive disengagement to be a matter of ceasing all cognitive activities. To take the validity of meditative equipoise as consisting in seeing nothingness is equivalent, in Mi pham’s view, to endorsing Hva Shang’s insistence on stilling thoughts and becoming almost zombie-like: “As it is the stilling of mind to attain the quietism without analysis, it would lack the illuminating power of *vipaśyanā*. Thus, like a stone at the ocean-bed, one eternally remains in the ordinary state”.¹⁰¹ The attainment of total freedom from latent impurities would then become impossible. Mi pham reveals another absurdity inherent in the doctrine that equates ‘emptiness’ with ‘nothingness’:

If one maintains ‘not seeing’ as the ‘seeing emptiness’, as the mode of reality is so profound, there is an acute danger of erring. As mind is not an object bearing a physical form, nobody is possible to see its colour etc. To think that merely ‘not seeing’ constitutes ‘realising emptiness’ is certainly committing a grave error. It is not possible to see a cow’s horn on the man’s head even after analysing it hundred times. It would be easy indeed for anyone, if ‘not seeing’ itself satisfies ‘realising its emptiness’.¹⁰²

...For the erroneous view which apprehends nothing whatsoever, no-thing whatsoever is established. There is no way to develop the ascertainment. It will have thus no capacity whatsoever to eliminate obstructions [of nirvāṇa and buddhahood]. Therefore, just as the fire is

inferred from the smoke, the difference between the two [*vipaśyanā* and seeing nothingness] should be understood on the account of its conduciveness to the realisation [of reality] and the abandonment [of defilements].¹⁰³

Go rampa's claim is that 'seeing nothing' constitutes the criterion of 'seeing emptiness'. If that is so, as Mi pham points out in the above statement, we should consider "not seeing a cow's horn on man's head" as equivalent to seeing emptiness. However, since "not seeing a cow's horn on man's head" has no purgative capacity whatsoever, it can not be taken as equivalent to seeing emptiness. Or else seeing emptiness should also be considered as cognitive process without having purgative or purifying capacity.

In short, by proposing, as we saw in the previous section, a doctrine of absolute transcendental wisdom, and by proposing, as we have seen here, a doctrine of nothingness, Go rampa argues that a non-dual state, strictly speaking, must refer to a transcendental wisdom that is totally free of all cognitive content and activity. His emphasis on metaphysical non-duality leads him to disparage all cognitive content and activity as utterly inconsistent with such non-duality. Because he takes non-duality to be absolute, Go rampa must insist on the complete elimination of the phenomenal world as the object of negation, he must also equate emptiness with nothingness,¹⁰⁴ and he must also take the full realisation of non-duality to be arrived at only when the subject-object dichotomy utterly collapses. As

Peter Harvey puts it: “the experience of transcendent knowledge, which is an undifferentiated unity, beyond the subject-object duality and a concept of any kind, even ‘thought’. It is thought which is no longer what is usually meant by ‘thought’, as it is without object, contentless”.¹⁰⁵ It is little wonder, then, that the water analogy strikes Go rampa so powerfully. Just as two jars of clear water form an inseparable mixture, Go rampa’s non-dualism requires a total fusion between subject and object. Tsong khapa, on the other hand, as we have already seen above and as we will explore further below, argues only for epistemic non-duality. His account of non-duality does not require the suspension of cognitive contents and activities, it does not require the treatment of the phenomenal world as the object of negation that must be eliminated, and it does not require the equation of emptiness with nothingness—yet Tsong khapa argues that it is possible, nevertheless, to achieve non-dual awareness.

3.2. Seeing phenomena as ‘empty’

As we have seen in earlier sections, Tsong khapa is entirely opposed to the formulation of a *metaphysical* non-duality and instead directs his efforts towards the defence of a non-duality that is *epistemic*. Thus he argues that it is possible to attain non-dual awareness even though the metaphysical distinction between subjectivity and objectivity remains. But how credible is

Tsong khapa's non-dual system if it retains the metaphysical duality of subject and object?

To see ultimate truth non-dualistically is, so far as Tsong khapa is concerned, to see phenomena as empty (*śūnya, stong pa*), and given the conceptual unity between emptiness (*śūnyatā, stong pa nyid*) and dependent arising (*pratityasamutpāda, rten cing 'brel bar byung ba*), so, in experiential terms, to see phenomena as empty is also to see phenomena as dependently arisen (*pratityasamutpanna*). It is critical, therefore, to understand the nature of the conceptual unity between emptiness and dependent arising, for the same principle of conceptual unity as applied between them, needs to be applied on the experiential level in order to resolve the tension between knowing phenomena as empty (*śūnya, ston pa*), therefore non-dualistically, and knowing them as dependently arisen (*pratityasamutpanna-dharma*), therefore dualistically. Here the issue of the unity of the two truths becomes central.

Candrakīrti and Tsong khapa both defend the validity of non-dual epistemic access to ultimate truth by applying the conceptual unity between emptiness and dependent arising on the empirical, experiential level. In commenting on Āryadeva's *Catuhśataka* [XV:10], Candrakīrti argues that seeing phenomena as empty should not be equated with seeing "the son of an infertile woman"—which is to say that seeing phenomena as empty should not be construed as seeing 'nothingness' or the 'mere absence of empirical

realities'.¹⁰⁶ Given the compatible relationship between dependent arising and emptiness, "a correct seeing of phenomena as dependently arisen should lead to seeing them as illusory, and strictly should not [lead to seeing] the son of an infertile woman".¹⁰⁷ Candrakīrti argues that "the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas....do not undermine dependently arisen phenomena, instead they posit things as illusory and the like because they fear that it might otherwise absurdly leads to undermining the existence of dependently arisen phenomena. They do not agree with such [nihilistic] advocates".¹⁰⁸ Candrakīrti further explains: "when things are subjected to logical analysis...because the essence of things remains unestablished, the illusory-like nature of each individual object should remain as the remainder".¹⁰⁹ Tsongkhapa also reiterates that "there is no inconsistency whatsoever should the repudiation of the essence be followed by a cognition of objects as having mere illusory meaning. It is, in fact vital".¹¹⁰

However, the cognition of anything positive by the ultimately valid as opposed to empirically valid consciousness—even the cognition of an *illusory* object—is seen as problematic from that ultimate perspective. All the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas agree that the ultimately valid consciousness does not itself positively affirm any object. For it to do so would be tantamount to an affirmation of the existence of essence in the face of analysis, but this would be radically inconsistent with the central metaphysics of the

Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika, namely, the thesis that nothing in the world has an essence that can defy or withstand critical analysis. “It would therefore be inconsistent for the reasoning consciousness—analysing whether or not essence has existence—itself to cognise even the existence of a mere illusory object”.¹¹¹

Even so, just as not seeing ultimate reality by the dual empirically valid consciousness does not imply the nonexistence of ultimate truth, so too, argues Tsong khapa “not seeing conventionalities in the non-dual state does not lead to the breakdown of the unity between characterised objects and their characteristics since their relationship is not posited from the vantage point of the reasoning consciousness realising ultimate reality”.¹¹² From the perspective of the empirically valid cognition that verifies things such as colour and shape, ultimate truth is nonexistent. But it does not follow from this that ultimate truth is itself nonexistent. It simply demonstrates, according to Tsong khapa, that while ultimate truth and its verifying transcendental wisdom are directly related, dual empirical wisdom and non-dual ultimate truth are not directly linked, although they are related indirectly¹¹³—they are, in fact, mutually supportive. Indeed, without mutual support between these cognitive resources, namely, empirical wisdom and transcendental wisdom, the attainment of a non-dual state is, in Tsong khapa’s view, impossible. Since the two truths, and the two modes of understanding, are mutually

interlocking, so, in spite of the non-duality of experience during the meditative equipoise, this non-dual experience still operates within the epistemic domain and therefore has to have an empirical ground.

Thus, although non-dual transcendental wisdom gives access to ultimate truth, Tsong khapa argues that this wisdom does not do so in isolation from dual empirical wisdom. Non-dual transcendental wisdom is itself an empirical phenomenon, and it is not, therefore, an empirically transcendent truth, as Go rampa would argue. Just as non-dual wisdom requires dual empirical wisdom as its grounding, so dual empirical wisdom requires non-dual wisdom to validate its epistemic authority. In this way, both cognitive resources mutually support each other thereby enabling the concerned agent to realise the truth pertaining to the five psychophysical aggregates from both dual and non-dual standpoints. Just as seeing phenomena as empty and seeing them as dependently arisen interlock in all circumstances, so, Tsong khapa argues, the non-dual knowledge of ultimate truth and the dual knowledge of conventional truth everywhere interlock epistemologically and ontologically.

If Tsong khapa were to argue that the ultimate reasoning consciousness, in isolation from empirical consciousness, sees things as dependently arisen, then Tsong khapa would incongruously be forced to suppose that an *ārya* or a buddha sees conceptual elaborations while in the non-dual state and so to

deny the possibility of the transcendence of conceptual elaborations even in that state; this would then force Tsong khapa to accept conceptual elaborations as withstanding or defying ultimate analysis, which would imply the existence of their essences. According to the standard Mādhyamika position accepted by Tsong khapa, a failure to transcend conceptual elaborations by non-dual or transcendental wisdom would mean a failure to grasp the true meaning of ultimate reality. "If ultimate truth were seen in terms of discrete objects such as psychophysical aggregates perceived for instance as a domain of touch, of expression, and of mind from the vantage point of consciousnesses realising ultimate, rather than seeing them by way of not seeing", then, Tsong khapa argues, "ultimate truth would not be beyond conceptual elaborations".¹¹⁴ It therefore makes sense to argue that seeing ultimate truth free from any duality is coherent and non-contradictory from the vantage point of non-dual wisdom, as opposed to the vantage point of dual empirical wisdom.

It is important to note, however, that to see ultimate truth, as non-dual wisdom sees it, without seeing phenomena in discrete terms, does not mean that non-dual wisdom is seeing 'nothing' or is devoid of cognitive content or activity. For Tsong khapa, non-dual wisdom 'sees' the empty or ultimate mode of one's identity and of one's five psychophysical aggregates, while dual wisdom sees the conventional, dependently arisen mode of one's

identity and of one's five aggregates. The only contrast between these two modes of seeing is that the former sees its object negatively while the latter sees its object positively. The dual and non-dual knowledge of an *ārya* or buddha, in particular, stand on an equal footing so far as their validity is concerned—the wisdom that understands phenomena as empty also understands phenomena as dependently arisen and *vice versa*. Even a non-dual experience of ultimate truth, on this view, does not undermine the status of conventional truth, since, after all, the realisation of ultimate truth is seen as equivalent to the realisation of conventional truth. It follows, therefore, that if non-dual knowledge is a correct knowledge of ultimate truth, then non-dual knowledge should necessarily be equivalent to the dual knowledge of phenomena as dependently arisen.

So, as far as Tsong khapa is concerned, there is no contradiction in claiming that, from the empirical standpoint, on the one hand, non-dual wisdom constitutes the subjective pole of consciousnesses with ultimate truth as its objective counterpart;¹¹⁵ from the ultimate vantage point, on the other hand, non-dual wisdom and ultimate truth, “are free from the duality of act (*bya ba*) and object acted upon (*byed pa*)”.¹¹⁶ In the non-dual state, even the cognitive interplay between subject and object appears, from the meditator's point of view, completely to cease. This is because, as Tsong khapa points out, “duality of act and object acted upon is posited strictly from the

perspective of empirical cognition".¹¹⁷ Although the dual appearances of subject and object completely dissolve from the perspective of non-dual wisdom, and thus the meditator does not experience the mutual interaction between distinct and separate elements—between the seer and the seen—the meditator nonetheless engages in an act of 'mere seeing'. As the Buddha explains to Bahiya:

In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognised, only the cognised. That is how you should train yourself [Ud I. 10]...then Bahiya, there is no you in terms of that. When there is no you in terms of that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress [Ud I. 10].¹¹⁸

The experience of 'mere seeing' in a non-dual form is valid only when it is empirically grounded and when there is cognitive activity occurring between non-dual wisdom and non-dual ultimate truth. Tsong khapa maintains, in fact, that the activity between subject and object is inevitable in any acquisition of valid knowledge. It is thus consistent to argue that non-dual wisdom involves a knowing subject and ultimate truth involves a known object.¹¹⁹

In any case, for Tsong khapa, the main purpose in attaining non-dual knowledge is not to eschew the subject-object dichotomy, but rather to purify deluded cognitive states, to destroy ego-tainted emotions and to transcend

false constructions of duality. The Buddha, for instance, explains what transcendence means as follows: “owing to the fading of ignorance and the arising of clear knowing (thoughts)—‘I am’, ‘I am this’, ‘I shall be’, ‘I shall not be’, ‘I shall be possessed of form’, ‘I shall be formless’, ‘I shall be percipient’, ‘I shall be non-percipient’, ‘I shall be neither percipient nor non-percipient’—do not occur to him” [*Samanupassanā Sutta* SN XXII.47].¹²⁰ Perhaps even more importantly, the Buddha makes a direct connection between the understanding of phenomena as dependently arisen and the abolition of dualities:

When a disciple of the noble ones has seen well with right discernment this dependent co-arising and these dependently co-arisen phenomena as they are actually present, it is not possible that he would run after the past, thinking, ‘Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past?’ or that he would run after the future, thinking, ‘Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?’ or that he would be inwardly perplexed about the immediate present, thinking, ‘Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?’ Such a thing is not possible. Why is that? Because the disciple of the noble ones has seen well with right discernment this dependent co-arising and these dependently co-arisen phenomena as they are actually present [*Paccaya Sutta*, SN XII.20].¹²¹

We can thus summarise our discussion of non-duality as follows. Tsong khapa's account of non-dual knowledge rests heavily on the unity of the two truths and therefore of emptiness and dependent arising. He argues that the validity of non-dual knowledge depends on preserving the unity between the understanding of the two truths, and therefore, between the understanding of emptiness and of dependent arising. The attainment of non-dual knowledge, according to Tsong khapa's view, requires an eradication of ignorance and other reifying tendencies and does not require any metaphysical shift—more specifically, the attainment of non-dual knowledge does not require the establishment of a metaphysical unity between subject and object nor the eschewal of conventionalities. Go rampa, however, has a very different view on these matters from Tsong khapa. He claims that non-dual wisdom necessarily undermines the acceptance of conventionalities. Indeed, so long as recognition is given to dependently arisen phenomena, so he holds that the attainment of non-dual knowledge will be impossible—he claims that this will be so even for an *ārya* or a buddha who instead of experiencing ultimate truth during the state of meditative equipoise, would experience only conceptual elaborations, that is, conventionalities. The fact that conventionalities are not seen during meditative equipoise, argues Go rampa, suggests that the status of dependently arisen phenomena is effectively undermined by the attainment of non-dual wisdom. Dependently arisen

phenomena are thus taken to be the objects to be eradicated by non-dual transcendental wisdom and nowhere enter into the cognitive domain of the non-dual wisdom of an *ārya* or a buddha. From Go rampa's perspective, the non-dual knowledge of ultimate reality is valid only when that knowledge is totally divorced from the realisation of phenomena as dependently arisen; from Tsong khapa's perspective, the non-dual knowledge of ultimate reality is valid only when that knowledge is tied together with the realisation of phenomena as dependently arisen.

Conclusion

In the *Condensed Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* (*Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, *sher phyin sdud pa*), the Buddha says:

Forms are not seen; and sensations are also not seen; unseen is recognition; and unseen is mind. Wherever consciousnesses (*shes pa*, *jñātā*), mind (*sems*, *citta*) and mental cognition (*yiḍ*, *manas*) are unseen, that itself is explained as seeing dharma by Tathāgatas. Sentient beings express through terms that [they have] seen space. Examine how they see space. Tathāgatā explains that similar is case with seeing dharma [ultimate reality]. No other example could illustrate the seeing of [ultimate reality].¹²²

Tsong khapa and Go rampa are in basic agreement in recognising ultimate truth as an object of knowledge and transcendental wisdom—non-conceptual wisdom—as the corresponding mode of knowing consciousness; they both

accept the negative approach—'seeing by way of not seeing'— as necessary in order to arrive at knowledge of ultimate reality; and they both view the achievement of ultimate truth by its cognising consciousness as possible only through the transcendence of conceptual categories. It is when we come to consider the issues of transcendental knowledge non-dual knowledge that the huge gulf that nevertheless exists between these two thinkers comes most clearly into view. In relation to non-dual knowledge for instance, Tsong khapa argues for an epistemic non-duality, while avoiding a metaphysical non-duality. In spite of the fact that he takes ultimate reality to be realised by way of not seeing any dualistic appearance from the vantage point of transcendental wisdom, Tsong khapa refuses to draw a metaphysical conclusion that would abolish the usual dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity. On the contrary, by means of an epistemic model of non-duality, Go rampa arrives at a metaphysical non-duality as his conclusion. As ultimate reality is seen without seeing any dualistic appearance, so, Go rampa argues, from that point onwards, ultimate reality and non-conceptual wisdom lose the contradistinctions of subjectivity and objectivity; from that point onwards, he claims, the transcendental subject and the transcendental object form a single metaphysical unity that can be interchangeably described as transcendental wisdom, Buddha, or *Tathāgata*.

Tsong khapa consistently maintains the idea of cognitive interaction between ultimate truth and ultimate wisdom throughout his transcendental and non-dual epistemology. Ultimate truth is consistently recognised as an object of knowledge, while transcendental wisdom is recognised as its knowing, hence 'subjective', counterpart. In Go rampa's case, having argued for the legitimacy of a metaphysical non-duality, and, therefore, for the existence of an absolute transcendental wisdom that has no cognitive 'sphere' associated with it, the claim that ultimate reality is an object of knowledge is taken as largely metaphorical. All of Go rampa's arguments pertaining to 'seeing by way of not seeing' and to transcendental and non-dual knowledge are motivated by the view that the only true and reliable knowledge is completely non-dual. Hence Go rampa constantly insists on the eschewal of the cognitive resources of conventional knowledge and its counterpart, conventional truth. In order to ensure that there is no duality whatsoever, he even rejects the dichotomy between the transcendental sphere and transcendental wisdom—the transcendental sphere, namely, emptiness, is equated with nothingness, while transcendental wisdom is itself a becoming one with that nothingness. Thus Go rampa is able to formulate an account of non-dual wisdom as being without content and without activity—as involving no object of knowledge distinct from the cognising consciousness. Transcendental wisdom itself becomes both subject and object such that,

strictly speaking, there is nothing to be known and only the non-dual knower remains.

Both Tsong khapa and Go rampa describe non-dual knowledge as being like a process of mixing water. They argue that the fusion between subjectivity and objectivity, from the meditator's point of view, reaches its climax in their non-dual state in a way that is like mixing clean water from two different jars by pouring it all into one jar. Tsong khapa for example argues: "from the vantage point of the wisdom that directly realises ultimate reality, there is not even the slightest duality between object and the object-possessing consciousness. Like mixing water with water, [yogi] dwells in the meditative equipoise".¹²³ Tsong khapa insists, however, that this metaphor should not be taken too far or too literally. It refers only to the cognitive process that occurs in total dissolution, and to the experience associated with that process, and must not be taken to represent the achievement of a metaphysical unity. Go rampa, on the other hand, insists on taking this analogy in its most literal sense: just as the clean water from the two separate jars, when poured together, merge without any trace of their prior separation, so, with the achievement of transcendental wisdom and the realisation of ultimate reality, the elements that appeared previously to be separate are merged in a single, complete, metaphysical unity. As Go rampa sees it, only

thus can a true dissolution of the duality between subjectivity and objectivity be achieved.

CHAPTER V

ENLIGHTENMENT

Introduction

So far as the unique cognitive abilities of a fully enlightened being are concerned, Tsong khapa and Go rampa are committed to the standard Mādhyamika position. They both agree that a buddha is an all-knowing cognitive agent and that enlightenment represents an unparalleled cognitive achievement. Yet, although both agree also that an enlightened being is able to know all objects of knowledge in the span of a single temporal instant, they disagree on a number of crucial issues concerning the nature of enlightenment, including the question of exactly how, and in what ways, an enlightened wisdom knows all objects of knowledge.

In this final chapter, we compare Tsong khapa and Go rampa's positions regarding the nature of enlightenment, the characteristics of enlightened knowledge, and how such knowledge is different from and superior to the knowledge of the other *āryas*. In the course of this comparison, we will see that, for Tsong khapa, the unparalleled cognitive potential of enlightenment lies in its ability to access the two truths simultaneously within

a single event of wisdom, whereas, for Go rampa, it lies in its capacity to access just one truth—metaphysically transcendent ultimate truth—within a single event of wisdom. Consequently, in the analysis that follows, the discussion of Tsong khapa's account will focus on how an *ārya* knows the two truths alternately and what prevents an *ārya* from knowing the two truths simultaneously. This will be followed by an examination of how, in Tsong khapa's view, an enlightened wisdom knows the two truths instantly yet simultaneously. The main focus of the discussion of Go rampa, on the other hand, will be on how the subtle misconception of dualistic appearance mentally conditions an *ārya* to perceive conventional truths during the post-meditative state, thereby preventing an *ārya* from grasping the universal character of ultimate reality. This will be followed by an examination of how, in Go rampa's view, an enlightened being knows metaphysically transcendent ultimate truth without any empirical grounding. The chapter will end with a brief critical analysis of Go rampa's account of enlightenment.

To begin with, however, we will undertake an analysis of the concept of the 'universality of ultimate truth' and its implications. The 'universality of ultimate truth' is directly related to the way in which an enlightened wisdom knows reality as it pertains to all objects of knowledge. Both Tsong khapa and Go rampa argue that it is precisely because the universality of ultimate truth

is exhaustively embraced by an enlightened wisdom, that such wisdom can be said to know the ultimate truth of all objects of knowledge.

1. The universality of ultimate truth

We will first consider Candrakirti's comments on the universality of ultimate truth, then turn to the two Tibetans. In explaining the unique mode of realising reality by an enlightened being, Candrakirti writes in the *Madhyamakāvatāra* [XI:11], that:

Despite the divisions created by vessels, space is itself without any divisions. Similarly, any division created by things is not present in [ultimate] reality. Hence, by fully accomplishing the realisation of the uniformity [of all phenomena], You! The Noble Knower (*mkhyen bzang khyed kyis*), comprehend [all] objects of knowledge in a single instant.¹

Commenting on this passage, Tsong khapa and Go rampa make use of very similar terminology. Despite the fact that space is variously divided through vessels and other containers, the space inside those vessels is characterised as a 'mere absence of all obstructing entity'. The space inside the vessels thus remains uniformly *undivided*. Similarly, although, there are manifold divisions of phenomena produced by their respective causes and conditions, the ultimate truth pertaining to them shares the same uniform nature. The ultimate truth of each conditioned phenomenon possesses the characteristic of non-arising, and this characteristic of non-arising is uniformly (*ro mnyam*

pa, samatā) shared by all other phenomena. In this sense, ultimate reality is shared by all phenomena without any division, just as the space inside various vessels and containers is nevertheless one and the same space.

Thus far Tsong khapa and Go rampa agree,² but when matters are considered more closely, the two accounts reveal striking differences. Ontologically, as we shall see later, Tsong khapa maintains his pluralistic standpoint in contrast to the monism of Go rampa. In spite of his commitment to the universality of ultimate truth, according to which ultimate truths share similar natures or characteristics (*ro gcig, eka-rasa*), Tsong khapa argues that each empirical truth has its own ultimate truth. On the other hand, precisely because of his commitment to the universality of ultimate truth, Go rampa argues that only one ultimate truth is associated with the diversity of empirical phenomena. Epistemologically, Tsong khapa argues that an enlightened wisdom always accesses the universality of ultimate truth in virtue of the fact that an enlightened being has knowledge of *both* the empirical and ultimate truths; Go rampa, on other hand, argues that an enlightened wisdom always accesses the universality of ultimate truth in virtue of the fact that the enlightened person has knowledge of ultimate truth alone.

These claims need to be examined in more detail—we will turn first to consider matters from the ontological standpoint. Although all empirically

given truths such as the aggregate of form, feelings etc., are contingently produced and have diverse conventional characters, all of them, according to Tsong khapa, are ultimately empty of the inherent arising. They share the universal characteristic (*ro gcig, eka-rasa*), literally, the same 'taste'. The Buddha, for example, makes this statement: "just as the great ocean has but one taste, the taste of salt, even so does this dharma and discipline have but one taste, the taste of release" [AN VIII.19].³ The *Samādhirājasūtra* (*ting nge 'dzin rgyal po'i mdo*) tells us: "By knowing one all are known. And by seeing one all are seen. Despite many things are said about [ultimate truth] in the conventional terms, no haughtiness should arise from it",⁴ and furthermore, "Just as you have recognised (*'du shes*) personality, even so you should apply the same insight with respect to all [phenomena]. All phenomena are of the [same] nature like a clear space".⁵ In the *Gaganagaṃjasaṃādhi* (*Nam mkha'i mdzod kyi ting nge 'dzin*), it is stated that: "Whoever by meditating on one phenomenon knows all phenomena as apprehensible like illusions and mirages, and knows them as hollow, false and ephemeral will before long reach the *summum bonum* (*snying po*) of enlightenment".⁶ And Āryadeva also tells us that "whosoever sees one is said to see all. That which is emptiness of one is the emptiness of all" [VIII:191].⁷ Referring to this last passage from Āryadeva, Candrakīrti has this to say:

The emptiness of the essence of form is itself the emptinesses of the essences of aggregates such as feeling. Similarly, the emptiness of the essence of eye-source is itself the emptinesses of the essences of all twelve sources. Likewise, the emptiness of the essence of eye-constituent is itself the emptinesses of the essences of all eighteen constituents. Equally so are [the emptinesses of the essences of] the infinite categories of things due to the distinct divisions in things, spaces, times and references. For whatever is the emptiness of the essence of one thing, is itself the emptinesses of the essences of all things. In spite of the fact that jars and bowls for example are distinct, space is not distinct. While things such as form are distinct, insofar as they all lack of essential arising of the form etc., they are not distinct. By understanding the lack the essential arising of merely one phenomenon, one understands the lack of the essential arising of all phenomena.⁸

Since all phenomena are empty of any substance or essence, they are all dependently arisen and relational entities. Tsong khapa agrees.⁹ Yet to endorse the claim that the ultimate nature of all phenomena is fundamentally the same does not, in Tsong khapa's view, make one a monist. While accepting this account of the ultimate nature of things, Tsong khapa remains committed to a pluralistic view. "A pluralistic view of the world", as Kalupahana puts it, "is not incompatible with dependent arising (*pratityasamputpāda*). Pluralism in the context of dependent arising does not imply the existence of self-contradictory truths. It need not necessarily lead to a notion of an Absolute that transcends such self-contradictory truths".¹⁰ As

far as Tsong khapa is concerned, the ultimate reality of, for instance, the table in front of my eyes, cannot be treated as simply identical with the ultimate reality pertaining to the chair that I am sitting on. The empty table cannot be taken as identical with the empty chair since the emptiness of the table is constitutive, not only of the empty table, but of the empty conceptual-linguistic conventions imposed upon it as well. Those conventions belong exclusively to the ultimate truth of the table and are not present in the chair. According to Tsong khapa, however, conceding this much does not prevent one from arguing for the universality of ultimate truth. Just as different objects occupy different spaces, and yet the space those objects occupy has the same 'non-obstructive' characteristic, so the ultimate realities of both table and chair are different, notwithstanding the fact that two ultimate realities have identical natures—they share 'the same taste'. Both of these emptinesses imply insubstantiality and essenceless in the negative sense, as well as dependently arisen and relational nature in the affirmative sense.

It can therefore be said that, according to Tsong khapa, an identical nature is universally shared by the ultimate realities of every empirical phenomenon. When the Buddha says that "the truth is one, there is no second" [*Cūḷa-vīyūha Sutta*, Sn IV.12],¹¹ Tsong khapa takes the Buddha to refer to the dependently arisen as the criterion of truth rather than to an absolute truth that transcends all forms of duality and plurality. Tsong khapa remarks

that “whatever you (the Buddha) have spoken has reference to dependent arising. For this leads to nirvāṇa. None of your action fails to lead to peace” [38].¹² Tsong khapa further argues that the Buddha has excelled everyone in terms of his knowledge and teachings of dependent arising: “Amongst teachers is the one who teaches dependent arising, and amongst knowledge is the wisdom of dependent arising reign supreme. These two are like the powerful monarchs ruling the world systems” [37].¹³

Given the fact that each dependently arisen phenomenon occupies a different space and time, the concept of the universality of ultimate reality does not threaten Tsong khapa’s commitment to a pluralistic account. In quite contrary fashion, however, Go rampa mobilises the universality of ultimate reality to reinforce his monism. “Since its nature is one and the same like space”, Go rampa argues, “it does not have different divisions”.¹⁴ As far as Go rampa is concerned, there is a clear incompatibility between a pluralistic account of ultimate reality and the commitment to its having a single uniform nature. On the other hand, commitment to a monistic ontology *and* to the universality of ultimate truth are seen to be compatible, and, indeed, as mutually reinforcing.

The ultimate reality of the table is, in Go rampa’s view, equivalent in every respect to the ultimate reality of all other phenomena. There is no difference whatsoever between the ultimate reality of the table and the

ultimate reality of the chair—or of anything else for that matter. Just as space is the same for all the different objects that occupy it (it is, one might say, the objects that differ, and not the space), so it is one and the same ultimate reality that universally underlies all empirical phenomena. The universality of ultimate truth could not, as Go rampa sees it, be maintained if the same ultimate reality were not shared by all empirical phenomena. If there were an ultimate truth that pertained to each phenomenon, then so would the ultimate truths of those phenomena, like the phenomena themselves, be confined within the bounds of those phenomena. In that case, there would be no universal ultimate truth, no universally applicable characteristics. Any pluralistic account of ultimate reality is thus seen, by Go rampa, as contradictory to the notion of the universality of ultimate reality.

Against the backdrop of these divergent ontological accounts, we shall now turn to the epistemological aspect of the claim concerning the universality of ultimate truth. Since ontology and epistemology are typically interdependent, so the two distinct ontological positions of Tsong khapa and Go rampa regarding the universality of ultimate truth provide the basis for the emergence of two distinct epistemological positions. For Tsong khapa, the unity between empirical and ultimate knowledge is the secret of the most enlightened wisdom. Given the inseparable ontological unity between the two truths, the knowledge of one of the two truths necessarily entails the

knowledge of the other. A fully enlightened being thus “perfectly knows the universality of [ultimate truths] within the span of a single instance of wisdom. Hence, the Noble-knower [a buddha] is said to acquire the wisdom that knows all objects of knowledge within a single instant”.¹⁵

Go rampa agrees with Tsong khapa that a buddha is all-knowing and that a buddha knows the universality of ultimate truth within a single instant. However, in Go rampa’s view, an enlightened wisdom accessing the universality of ultimate truth operates entirely independently of any empirical truths. For this reason, Go rampa holds that it is necessary that an enlightened wisdom sever all epistemic connections with empirical knowledge. “When the universality of ultimate truth of all phenomena is understood as *Dharmadhātu*”, Go rampa says, “a single event of wisdom knows this within a single moment. This is followed by the disappearance of distinctions between ultimate reality (*ji lta ba*), empirical reality (*ji snyed pa*), and apprehending wisdom (*yul can yeshes*)”.¹⁶ Consequently these latter three form a non-dual, absolute and independent transcendental wisdom wherein all dualities fuse. At this point the knowing wisdom and the object known literally become one.

For an *ārya*, who is yet to be fully enlightened, the wisdom that embraces the universality of ultimate truth arises only during the meditative equipoise and not during the post-meditative equipoise. In fact, for a fully

enlightened being, there is no such cognitive event as the post-meditative equipoise—an enlightened being, as Go rampa holds it, remains eternally absorbed with the universality of ultimate truth. This, as he sees it, is the highest cognitive virtue of an enlightened being.¹⁷ It is crucial to note that for Go rampa, knowing the universality of ultimate truth is not a matter of engaging with ultimate truth. With the attainment of full enlightenment, the duality between the subject and the object totally disappears. The interaction between what is to be known and the knower comes to an end. The knower—transcendental wisdom—alone survives. This is, as Go rampa holds it, the way an enlightened being directly and personally knows (*so so rang rig pa*) the universality of ultimate reality without any duality. To make this point more explicit, knowing the universality of ultimate truth means to become one with the unconditioned and transcendental ultimate truth. The knower becomes timeless, neither arising nor ceasing.¹⁸

If it were true that an enlightened being knows all objects of knowledge within the span of a single instant, as both Tsong khapa and Go rampa claim, the question then arises: how is this possible? In order to answer this question, we will first explore why it is that other sentient beings (particularly the three types of *āryas*, namely, *ārya-śrāvākas*, *ārya-pratyekabuddhas* and *ārya-bodhisattvas*) lack the understanding of all objects of knowledge within a single instant and then return to the analysis of an enlightened being's

superior ways of knowing. Like Tsong khapa, Go rampa¹⁹ acknowledges the significance of exploring the ways in which an *ārya* (yet to be enlightened) knows the two truths. This exploration, according to both of them, facilitates the understanding of an enlightened being's exceptional ways of knowing. A precise evaluation of the cognitive framework within which the knowledge of sentient beings operates is seen as pedagogically useful for the analysis of the cognitive operation of an enlightened being. Understanding the limits and scope of the cognitive potential of sentient beings is thus instrumental in gauging the unparalleled cognitive potential of a buddha—of a fully enlightened being.

2. *Ārya's modes of knowing the two truths*

Consistent with the standard Mādhyamika position, both Tsong khapa and Go rampa maintain that, with the exception of buddhas (fully enlightened beings) and including *ārya-śravākas*, *ārya-pratyekabuddhas* and *ārya-bodhisattvas* of the tenth *bhūmi* and below, all sentient beings are under the influence of different degrees of misconception regarding the two truths. Ordinary beings (*so skye, prthagjana*) are predominantly influenced by the underlying reifying ignorance and afflictive defilements. Ordinary beings are actively reifying cognitive agents who superimpose absolute characteristics such as essences, substantiality or permanence, on to the nature of things, processes or events.

However, *ārya-bodhisattvas* (from the eight *bhūmi* and below) are free from the active reifying tendencies and afflictive defilements. As they have directly experienced ultimate truth, so they have eradicated all negative emotions, including deluded ignorance, and yet they are still under the influence of latent defilements. Due to the continued and sustained orientation towards ultimate truth that is directly and personally realised in meditative equipoise, *Ārya-śravākas*, *ārya-pratyekabuddhas* and the *ārya-bodhisattvas* of the eighth to the tenth *bhūmi* are, however, totally free of even the subtlest latent reifying tendencies.²⁰ Yet notwithstanding their very high spiritual qualifications, these three types of *āryas* are still under the influence of what is called 'non-deluded ignorance'—the conditioned state of mind to which there remains a predisposition in virtue of the previously existent latent conception of essence (*bden 'dzin gyi bags chags*). This means that although *ārya-śravākas*, *ārya-pratyekabuddhas* and the *ārya-bodhisattvas* of the eighth to the tenth *bhūmi* no longer have even the latent reifying psychological tendencies, they are yet to be fully enlightened, and, on the cognitive level, they still have very subtle limitations. They remain predisposed to the assumption of dualities (rather than the reification of dualities) that is deeply habituated by the previously existent latent reifying tendencies. Often the subtle misconceptions possessed by the three types of *āryas* are described as 'predisposed misconceptions of dualistic appearance' (*gnyis snang 'phrul ba'i bag chags*).²¹

To this point both Tsong khapa and Go rampa are in agreement. But what constitutes the 'misconception of dualistic appearance' (*gnyis snang 'phrul ba*)? And how should it be defined? To begin with, both the Tibetan Mādhyamikas consider the misconception of dualistic appearance to consist in a very subtle tension between the mode of phenomenal existence and how that existence is understood—it involves a minimal conflict between ontological status and the corresponding epistemic state. However, on closer observation, it becomes evident that Tsong khapa and Go rampa offer strikingly different accounts of what is at issue here: Tsong khapa's ontology of ultimate truth has to accommodate the status of conventional truth, consequently his non-dual epistemology must necessarily accommodate the understanding of conventional truth; Go rampa's ontology of ultimate truth necessarily excludes the status of conventional truth, and consequently his non-dual epistemology must necessarily exclude the understanding of conventional truth.

'The dualistic appearance', as Tsong khapa understands it, is a subtle misconception that pertains to the nature of both truths. It is described as dualistic appearance because of the persisting subtle conflict between the ontological status of ultimate truth and its concurrent epistemic status due to the presence of the subtle epistemic error. The solution to a dualistic appearance lies, therefore, in a purging of the epistemic error. The presence of

a mere dichotomy between the subject and the object, in Tsong khapa's view, is not part of the problem. In fact, the mere dichotomy between subject and the object is, as Tsong khapa understands it, inevitable for even the most evolved wisdom. No knowledge whatsoever is possible without the interaction between cognition and cognitive field. In the *Dvaytānupassanā Sutta*, the Buddha also points out that dualities in themselves are not problems, so long as they are understood properly:

Monks, if there are any who ask, 'Your listening to teachings that are skilful, noble, leading onward, going to self-awakening is a prerequisite for what?' they should be told, 'For the sake of knowing qualities of dualities as they actually are'. 'What duality are you talking about?' 'This is dukkha. This is the origination of dukkha': this is one contemplation. 'This is the cessation of dukkha. This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of dukkha': this is the second contemplation. For a monk rightly contemplating this duality in this way—heedful, ardent and resolute—one of the two fruits can be expected: either gnosis right here and now, or—if there be any remnant of clinging-sustenance—non-return...

Now, if there are any who ask 'Would there be the right contemplation of dualities in yet another way?' they should be told, 'There would'. 'How would that be?' 'Whatever dukkha comes into play is all from ignorance as a requisite condition': this is one contemplation. 'From the remainderless fading and cessation of that very ignorance, there is no coming into play of dukkha': this is a second contemplation. For a monk rightly contemplating this duality in this way—heedful, ardent and resolute—one of the two fruits can be expected: either gnosis right here and now, or—if there be any remnant of clinging-sustenance—non-return [*Dvaytānupassāna Sutta*, Sn III.12].²²

Like Tsong khapa, Go rampa's concept of dualistic appearance also refers to a conflict between the ontological status of ultimate truth and the concurrent epistemic state. Nevertheless, unlike Tsong khapa, Go rampa views the conflict as one between the ultimate subject and the ultimate object. As far as he is concerned, the subject-object dichotomy is at the heart of the problem and the only solution is to eschew the objective element in order to embrace a metaphysical non-duality—so long as the interaction between the apprehending consciousness and apprehended object is maintained, so also, in Go rampa's view, is the misconception of the subtle dualistic appearance maintained.

Having explained what 'dualistic appearance' means, the next question to be addressed is: what harm does this duality actually cause?—What is wrong with maintaining this subtle dualistic appearance? Both Tsong khapa and Go rampa argue that it is the presence of the misconception of dualistic appearance that prevents the three types of *āryas*—*ārya-śrāvākas*, *ārya-pratyekabuddhas* and the *ārya-bodhisattvas*—from accomplishing the simultaneous realisation of the universality of ultimate reality; it is the presence of the misconception of dualistic appearance that means that they can only know conventional truths and ultimate truth interchangeably. The subtle misconception of dualistic appearance is, therefore, seen as an obstruction that retards the cognitive potential of those three types of *āryas*.

Go rampa maintains that the presence of this conception of dualistic appearance prevents the three types of *āryas* from simultaneously accessing the non-dual universality of ultimate reality within a single temporal instant. The presence of this subtle dualism allows them to access ultimate reality only interchangeably with the empirical. He argues that the three types of *āryas* perceive empirical truths in their post meditative equipoise entirely because of the misconception of dualistic appearance. “Because of the fact that they have not yet eradicated the predisposition of dualistic appearance”, Go rampa argues, “their subsequently attained wisdom (*rjes thob yeshes, prṣṭha labdha jñāna*) perceives the plurality of characterised objects (*chos can, dharmin*) associated with arising and cessation”.²³ As long as the perception of characterised objects with the characteristics of arising and cessation persists, it is not possible for the three types of *āryas* to engage with the universality of ultimate reality. The plurality of empirical realities that these *āryas* experience during the post-meditative equipoise, thus prevents them, according to Go rampa, from accessing ultimate reality; the wisdom of the meditative equipoise, on the other hand, immediately presents them with that reality—“During the meditative equipoise, they realise ultimate reality; hence, neither arising nor cessation is perceived”.²⁴ The alternation between knowledge of conventionalities and ultimate reality, as Go rampa sees it, “is an indication that these *āryas* have yet to accomplish the perfection of

knowing the universality of all phenomena in terms of their *dharmadhātu* (*chos dbyings*)".²⁵ That they have yet to do so is precisely because of the presence of the subtle misconception of dualistic appearance.

On this, as on so many other matters, Tsong khapa's view differs markedly from that held by Go rampa. Indeed, it is very useful here to recall Tsong khapa's emphatic distinction between the role of ultimately valid cognition—transcendental wisdom, non-conceptual wisdom—and empirically valid cognition. Certainly it is true, according to Tsong khapa, that when the three types of *āryas* directly and personally know ultimate truth by means of ultimately valid cognition, they do not concurrently, or simultaneously, know conventional truth. Likewise, when these *āryas* directly and personally know conventional truth, they do not concurrently, or simultaneously know ultimate truth. The two kinds of knowledge operate alternately. Hence Tsong khapa argues that "so long as Buddhahood is not attained, it is not possible for a single cognition simultaneously to perceive characterised phenomena each individually while at the same directly cognising ultimate reality within a single temporal instant".²⁶ Instead, "these two kinds of knowledge come about interchangeably".²⁷ This does not mean, however, that, in the direct knowledge of ultimate truth, the ultimately valid cognition of the three *āryas* operates independently of its counterpart—empirically valid cognition. Similarly, it is not meant to suggest

that, in the direct realisation of conventional truth, these *āryas*' empirically valid cognition operates independently of its counterpart—ultimate valid cognition. Realising the two truths, either alternately or simultaneously, necessarily requires mutual support between the two valid cognitions. As far as Tsong khapa is concerned, this mutual collaboration between the two cognitive resources is one of the essential conditions for any intelligible and coherent knowledge. Without such coordination between the two cognitive resources, neither the realisation of ultimate truth, nor the realisation of conventional truth is possible. For Tsong khapa, to say that the two cognitive resources mutually support one another is thus not to suggest that a concerned cognitive agent has simultaneous knowledge of both truths. Even the alternate knowledge of the two truths by these *āryas* requires mutual support between the two cognitive resources. Indeed, the cognitive capacity to have either successive or simultaneous knowledge of the two truths depends on the same epistemic conditions.

In Tsong khapa's view, there are two different approaches to the question as to how, and in what ways, the subtle misconception of duality imposes limits on the knowledge of the three types of *āryas*. It can be approached either from the standpoint of meditative equipoise (the ultimate standpoint) or from the post-meditative equipoise (the empirical standpoint). From the former standpoint, the issue is how the subtle misconception of

duality imposes limits on the scope of these *āryas'* knowledge of all phenomena as empty (*śūnya, stong pa*). From the latter standpoint, the issue is how the subtle misconception of duality imposes limits on the scope of these *āryas'* knowledge of all phenomena as dependently arisen (*pratityasamutpanna, rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba'i chos*). In the case of the approach from the standpoint of meditative equipoise, Tsong khapa maintains that, while the three types of *āryas* dwell in the meditative state, they have direct knowledge of ultimate truth, and consequently they know that all phenomena are empty. Because of the limits imposed by the subtle misconception of duality, however, they still do not have direct knowledge of the emptiness of empty phenomena (*śūnya-śūnyatā, stong pa stong pa nyid*) itself. To know empty phenomena themselves as empty, these *āryas* have directly to know all empty phenomena as equivalent to dependently arisen phenomena from the ultimate standpoint. This insight requires the fullest possible understanding of how the non-conceptual knowledge of phenomena as empty is equivalent to the conceptual knowledge of phenomena as dependently arisen. This in turn requires the cognitive capacity to form the empirical world-view of Madhyamaka from the ultimate vantage point. And this depends on the simultaneous knowledge of the two truths. However, as long as the scope of *āryas'* knowledge is deficient in virtue of the subtle misconception of duality due to previously existent mental predispositions,

the simultaneous knowledge of the two truths is not achievable. Since these *āryas* still have tendencies towards the dichotomisation of the two truths, so they also retain tendencies towards the dichotomisation of empty and dependently arisen phenomena.

In the case of the approach from the post-meditative standpoint, Tsongkhapa maintains that when the three types of *āryas* are engaging in practical activities in the post-meditative state, they directly know conventional truth, hence *āryas* know that all phenomena are dependently arisen. However because of the limits imposed by the subtle misconception of duality, they still do not know dependently arisen phenomena themselves as dependently arisen. The latter knowledge requires the direct understanding of how dependently arisen phenomena are empty from the conventional standpoint without relying on inference. This in turn requires the fullest possible understanding of how the conceptual knowledge of phenomena as dependently arisen is equivalent to the non-conceptual knowledge of all phenomena as empty. In other words, *āryas* have to know the compatibility between the ultimate and the conventional views of Mādhyamika. Again this understanding depends on the simultaneous knowledge of the two truths as in the first approach. But because *āryas* of the three kinds are not yet free from the tendency to dichotomise the two truths, therefore, to dichotomise empty

and dependently arisen phenomena, simultaneous knowledge is not possible for them.

Based on the arguments relating to the two different approaches, Tsong khapa maintains that *āryas* of the three kinds have only alternate knowledge of the two truths. Either they directly know conventional truth in the meditative equipoise, or they directly know ultimate truth in the post-meditative equipoise. One thing that is certain, however, is that these three types of *āryas* could not have concurrent knowledge of both the truths, and therefore could not have concurrent knowledge of empty and dependently arisen phenomena. Since it is clear that the subtle misconception of duality is taken to have a significant negative impact on the scope of knowledge of the three types of *āryas*, it is no wonder that Tsong khapa sees the eradication of the subtle misconception of duality as soteriologically indispensable in order to reach Buddhahood. As a consequence, it is claimed that only buddhas, namely, perfectly enlightened beings, are capable of having a direct knowledge of both the truths simultaneously, and hence are capable of knowing empty and dependently arisen phenomena concurrently.

With this, we complete our analysis of Go rampa and Tsong khapa's positions relating to the scope of the knowledge of *ārya-śravākas* and *ārya-pratekyabuddha* and *ārya-bodhissattvas* of the tenth *bhūmis*. In short, they both agree that all *āryas*, except *ārya-buddhas*, are incapable of knowing the

universality of ultimate truth within a single cognitive event. They also agree, therefore, that, due to the influence of the subtle misconception of duality, *āryas* of the three kinds do not have an exhaustive knowledge of all knowable objects. The two Tibetans nevertheless disagree inasmuch as Go rampa insists that it is entirely due to the subtle misconception of duality that *āryas* mistakenly perceive empirical truths in the post-meditative state, while Tsong khapa insists that it is due to such misconception that the three types of *āryas* are prevented from simultaneous knowledge of the two truths.

3. A buddha's exceptional mode of knowing the two truths

Having discussed the cognitive scope of *āryas* and the limits imposed by the subtle misconception of duality, our focus in the next two sections will be on the exceptional cognitive scope of the fully enlightened being who is free from even this subtle misconception. Given that Tsong khapa and Go rampa's treatments of this exceptional knowledge of a buddha are totally distinct, we shall discuss them separately to preserve their distinctive characteristics. First, we shall turn to Go rampa's treatment of enlightened knowledge and then, second, to Tsong khapa's.

3.1. Knowing the two truths from the two conflicting perspectives

For Go rampa, the subtle misconception of dualistic appearance is none other than the conception of the duality of subject and object. This duality is the subtlest object of negation. It is also called the 'subtlest obstruction of knowledge' (*shes bya'i sgrib pa phra mo*).²⁸ The fact that an *ārya* experiences empirical truths, the objects of knowledge, during the post-meditative state and cannot embrace the universality of ultimate truth in all circumstances is, argues Go rampa, entirely due to this misconceived dichotomy. Enlightenment therefore, culminates with the total eradication of the subject-object dichotomy. The attainment of enlightenment means the attainment of the absolute non-dual wisdom. This wisdom, as Go rampa argues, is metaphysically transcendent. It is free from any empirical basis.

In Go rampa's epistemology, enlightened wisdom is seen as involving two distinct ways of knowing—knowing things from an 'enlightened perspective' and knowing things from the 'other's perspective'. The chief feature of the enlightened knowledge is its capacity to cognise the universality of ultimate truth. The most crucial condition necessary to attain this wisdom is the eradication of the subject-object dichotomy. The eradication of this dichotomy, in Go rampa's view, is the only possible way to achieve the eschewal of empirical truth and of the empirically valid

consciousness that verifies it. Hence Go rampa argues that: “conventional truths enunciated in those contexts²⁹ are non existent [from an enlightened consciousness]. Since, there is no erroneous apprehending subject, its corresponding object—[conventional truth]—does not exist”.³⁰ The “erroneous apprehending subject” in this context refers to all empirically valid consciousnesses. The empirically valid consciousness verifying empirical truths is, in Go rampa’s view, representative of the ignorant cognitive activities that involve the subject-object dichotomy. Since an enlightened person is free from ignorance, so the empirically valid consciousness is also absent. Thus, empirical truths projected by ignorance and verified by the empirically valid consciousness are not verified by an enlightened wisdom:

Despite the fact that [a buddha] does not perceive appearance of the conventional categories—arising, cessation etc., explained to the disciples, [a buddha] does perceive the appearance of the non-differentiated being (*dbyings*) of the ultimate reality... Even then, there is no appearance which leads to duality in perception, for even the slightest fallacious inclinations [of committing to duality] has already been eschewed.³¹

In short, the eight entities including arising, cessation etc., discussed in the preamble of the *Mūlamadhyamakārikā* are all conceptual elaborations; even so, are twenty-seven analysable factors—from the conditions up to views—examined throughout the twenty-seven chapters, and the entire conventional system including all empirical entities. In the buddha-realm, they are realised by an enlightened being

within a span of a single instant of the enlightened wisdom. Although, those conceptual elaborations remain unseen, there is no contradiction in saying that they are perceived as *Dharmadhātu*, inalienably fused with the universality of ultimate truth.³²

Jayānanda,³³ Red mda' ba,³⁴ Śākya mChog ldan,³⁵ sTag tsang,³⁶ Kun mkhyen Pedkar, Mi skyod rDo rje,³⁷ Mi pham,³⁸ dGe 'dun Chos 'phel³⁹—all defend Go rampa's view. They all argue that enlightenment is transcendent of empirical experiences. For example, Kun mkhyen Pedkar writes:

To the extent the remaining obstructions (*sgrib pa lhag ma*) exist, to that extent multifaceted appearances are perceived as illusory etc., during the post meditative state. However, from the moment all latencies [of previously existent defilements] are exhaustively [eliminated], conventional phenomena (*kun rdzob kyi chos*) are eternally not perceived. Instead one eternally dwells on essence (*rang bzhin*) of the meditative equipoise.⁴⁰

Go rampa's account of enlightened wisdom, characterised as metaphysically absolute, non-dual and transcendent, clearly indicates his unrelenting effort to impose the *Ālayavijñāna*, the 'foundation consciousness'⁴¹ of the Yogacāra Idealism (or Vijñānvāda, the Mind Only school), on the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka system. "The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika", claims Go rampa "must accept the empirical existence of the *Ālayavijñāna* since it is revealed in the Bhagvan's discourses. Ācārya [Candrakīrti] also says that it is an empirical truth⁴² and a vehicle to understand ultimate truth".⁴³ *Ālayavijñāna* is

a "sheer luminous consciousness. Though it is not totally distinct from the aggregates of six [consciousnesses], it" according to Go rampa, "endures uninterruptedly through to the level of the Buddhhood right from the [ordinary state of] sentient being".⁴⁴ The enlightened wisdom is recovered, then, from the foundational consciousness that is already existent in each and everyone—including even ordinary beings. It is this wisdom that alone exists after the total elimination of the empirical system. It exists unconditionally and non-relationally: "The process of arising and cessation is not perceived, hence it is neither conditioned nor impermanent phenomena".⁴⁵

Elsewhere Go rampa argues that "because every conditioned phenomenon is momentary, it arises and ceases. Hence both [arising and cessation] are untenable [as features of enlightened wisdom]".⁴⁶ Go rampa goes on: "Whatever is conditioned would inevitably bear false and deceptive characteristics. And, so long as the perception of arising and cessation exists, the meaning of dependently arisen would not be one of non-arising".⁴⁷ "To the extent the appearance of conventionalities are not ceased and to the extent the reference of consciousness is not done away with", as dGe 'dun Chos 'phel puts it, "to that extent, in spite of having a direct knowledge of emptiness, one is forced to be committed to the previously accepted [essentialist's] views".⁴⁸ Furthermore, Go rampa argues, "impermanent, conditioned, false and deceptive phenomena are experienced by *āryas* in

lower levels of the noble path, they must be nonexistent for an enlightened wisdom".⁴⁹ Phenomena are nonexistent not only in the ultimate sense, but also in the empirical sense at this point. "The ultimate nonexistence of [impermanent etc.] is also experienced even by *āryas* in the lower scale of the noble path", therefore, it does not demonstrate any exceptional cognitive potentials on the part of an enlightened person.⁵⁰ But the nonexistence of impermanent, conditioned, false, and deceptive phenomena, from the empirical standpoint, does indeed demonstrate the exceptional qualities of an enlightened wisdom.

To reinforce the non-dual character of enlightened wisdom, Go rampa argues for the non-differentiated integration between wisdom and ultimate truth. Here he uses two slightly different approaches: First, Go rampa argues that, with the attainment of Buddhahood, consciousness itself is transformed into the ultimate truth. "Having realised emptiness, and having it thoroughly familiarised, all adventitious stains are eradicated", states Go rampa, adding that "mind itself is transformed into the uncontaminated sphere (*zag med kyi dbyings*). This is the ultimate buddha, an embodiment of virtues of the abandonment and the realisation".⁵¹ Second, Go rampa makes much more explicit the fusion between enlightened wisdom and ultimate truth.

Having burnt all the fuels of the conceptual elaborations—the objects of knowledge such as arising and cessation, permanence and annihilation—through the *Vajra*-like meditative stabilisation.

Dharmadhātu, free from all conceptual elaborations, sustains. So, too, the continuum of the previously existent consciousness becomes free from the conceptual elaborations such as arising and cessation. The [enlightened] wisdom is thus formed by the inseparable nature.⁵²

In defending his idea of the non-differentiated character of enlightened wisdom, Go rampa even dismisses the existence of mind and mental factors that might otherwise be thought to persist in an enlightened person. So long as “mind and the mental factors exist, the subject-object duality is inevitable... Thus would exist differentiation on the basis of the perception of objects and the perception of their particularities, and even so among the particularities of the objects, exist different types of perceptions”.⁵³ However, “once a non-differentiated consciousness—which is free from all conceptual elaborations, the objects of knowledge such as arising, and cessation—is attained there is not the slightest dualistic appearance. Not even different modes of perception exist”.⁵⁴ Since non-duality is seen as the chief qualification of enlightened knowledge, so “the slightest involvement of duality, even in the case of enlightenment denies ultimate truth”.⁵⁵

This absolute non-dualistic account gives rise to several pertinent questions. If it is true that an enlightened wisdom does not see anything from its own perspective, how could an enlightened being interact with others, with his followers, for example? How could a buddha determine what discourse is beneficial and appropriate for others if he does not see others? In

response to these questions, Go rampa introduces what he calls 'knowing from the other's perspective' (*gzhan ngor shes pa*). Although Go rampa claims that an enlightened being does not experience anything empirical from an enlightened perspective, he holds that an enlightened being nonetheless recognises and identifies empirical phenomena and interacts with other people from the 'other's perspective'. For example when the Buddha sees one of his disciples, say Śāriputra, the Buddha sees and interacts with Śāriputra from Śāriputra's own perspective. Likewise, when the Buddha sees phenomenal objects, and engages with them, he does this from his disciples' points of view. Therefore knowledge from the other's perspective, although it is the second form of knowledge of an enlightened being, is not part of the cognitive operation of enlightened wisdom.

Thus Go rampa is happy to maintain that knowledge from the enlightened perspective and knowledge from the other's perspective are contradictory and mutually exclusive. From an enlightened perspective, as Go rampa argued earlier, a buddha experiences nothing whatsoever, neither ultimately nor empirically. Go rampa, in fact, dismisses the distinction between the empirical and ultimate standpoints at the level of Buddhahood: "The empirical standpoint is accepted merely from the other's perspective. The distinction between the empirical and ultimate standpoints does not apply to the enlightened perspective".⁵⁶ Thus, no world of empirical

experience exists for an enlightened being. Yet, from the other's perspective, namely, from the perspective of ordinary beings, Go rampa argues that an enlightened being experiences everything. An enlightened being experiences, engages, and interacts with the world from the *point of view of ignorant ordinary beings*.

dGe 'dun Chos 'phel illustrates the concept of 'other's perspective' by using an analogy:

When a magician conjures up an illusory elephant, the audience sees it as a real elephant. The magician plays his magical tricks in order to see something non-elephant as if it is a real elephant. Now, when the audience asks the magician: 'is this a real elephant?' [the magician] replies "yes". In this case, the magician accepts the elephant from the other's perspective.⁵⁷

Thus the world of empirical truths, reified by ignorance, is all of sudden experienced by an enlightened person from the other's perspective. It is, therefore, claimed that "both ultimate arising and empirical arising exist for [an enlightened person] from the other's perspective. That which is said to be non-arising is with reference to buddha's own perspective. From this perspective neither ultimate arising nor empirical arising exists".⁵⁸ It is worth reflecting on the key phrase Go rampa uses here. He claims that when a buddha engages with the world from the other's perspective, then a buddha, like the naïve ordinary beings, is said to reify, not only empirical arising, but

also *ultimate arising*. So, in this sense and according to this view, even an enlightened being is an essentialist or a reificationist as are ordinary beings. While it is true that, “from a buddha’s own perspective, since arising and cessation are not perceived, there is neither conditioned nor impermanent phenomena. From the other’s perspective, the perspective of his disciples,” Go rampa argues, “[that an enlightened being experiences] arising and cessation, since arising and cessation of virtues exist”.⁵⁹ Although Go rampa insists that enlightened beings experience arising and cessation from the other’s perspective, “it does not follow that an enlightened wisdom is itself characterised by arising and cessation. It simply shows how they appear to the minds of disciples”, argues Go rampa.⁶⁰ An enlightened person as mentioned earlier “perceives arising and cessation from the other’s perspective (*gzhan snang*), but certainly not from his own-perspective (*rang snang*)”.⁶¹

Other supporters of Go rampa’s doctrine of knowing from the other’s perspective include Mi pham,⁶² sTag tsang⁶³ and Mi skyod rDo rje.⁶⁴ They also advocate that the exceptional quality of enlightened knowledge consists in not experiencing anything empirical from the enlightened perspective but experiencing everything from the other’s perspective.

One thing that stands out as the essential feature of knowledge from the other’s perspective is that it is, in every sense of the word, exactly equivalent

to the knowledge of ordinary beings. Just as an ordinary person reifies essence, claims Go rampa, so too, as we have just seen, does an enlightened being also reify essence. On this point, Rong ston, who is otherwise one of Go rampa's traditional allies, ridicules the doctrine of the other's perspective. To claim that the attaining of enlightenment requires knowledge from the perspective of ordinary beings is, according to Rong ston, tantamount to claiming that ordinary beings are accomplished enlightened beings and that enlightened beings are ordinary beings. Without expending any effort, ordinary beings are born with the ordinary perspectives, and they should therefore be inherently possessed with enlightened knowledge.⁶⁵

3.2. Knowing the two truths simultaneously

Tsong khapa agrees with Go rampa in asserting that the attainment of Buddhahood culminates with the total eradication of the subtle object of negation—with the eradication of the misconception of duality. Among the many exceptional qualities of an enlightened person, Tsong khapa recognises the cognitive ability of an enlightened person to have direct and simultaneous realisation of the two truths within a single instant as one of the most significant abilities. In Tsong khapa's view, the coordination between a buddha's ultimately valid cognition and empirically valid cognition is absolutely essential to achieve this simultaneity. Without the coordination

between these two cognitive operations, he argues, it is not possible for an enlightened person to realise either of the two truths. The ultimately valid consciousness of an enlightened person is not capable of realising ultimate truth in the absence of its empirically valid cognition. Similarly, the empirically valid consciousness of an enlightened being is not capable of realising conventional truth in the absence of ultimately valid consciousness.⁶⁶ Thus two valid cognitive resources of an enlightened person are always mutually entailing. Not only they do not function independently of each other, but the two cognitive resources no longer know the two truths alternately, as they do in the case of other *āryas*. Prior to the total eradication of the subtle misconception of dualistic appearance (i.e., before the attainment of full enlightenment), then, as we saw earlier, these two cognitive resources know the two truths alternately and interchangeably depending on the emphasis of the practices embarked upon by the concerned cognitive agent. Either the coordination of the two cognitive resources culminates via directly knowing ultimate truth in the meditative equipoise, or their coordination culminates in the form of directly knowing phenomena as dependently arisen in the post-meditative states. It is not possible at this stage to have direct and concurrent knowledge of the two truths through the coordination of the two wisdoms.

With the attainment of enlightenment, and with the eradication of even the most subtle epistemic error that is the misconception of dualistic appearance, Tsong khapa holds that every single enlightened consciousness manifests itself as a simultaneous interplay of these two cognitive resources. “When every misconception is eradicated without a trace”, explains Tsong khapa, “even each individual moment of every single [enlightened] consciousness (*yeshes*) embodies an interplay of dual consciousness that arise uninterruptedly with the identical characteristics”.⁶⁷ By knowing empirical truth, then, an enlightened being knows ultimate truth, and by knowing ultimate truth, an enlightened being knows empirical truth. In this way an enlightened being knows the two objects of knowledge (*shes bya gnyis*) simultaneously within the span of a single event of wisdom. This is possible here because the ultimately valid consciousness and the empirically valid consciousness of a buddha perform their functions in a way that makes these consciousnesses inseparably intertwined. The uncritical cognitive engagement of every single empirically valid consciousness of an enlightened person is accompanied by the critical cognitive engagement of every single ultimately valid consciousness of a buddha and vice versa. Recognising this mutually inclusive cognitive resources of a buddha, Tsong khapa argues that every single enlightened consciousness knows both the truths directly.

From a slightly different perspective, it can also be said that the previously alternating engagements between the 'meditative equipoise' (*mnyam gzhag, samāhita*) and the 'subsequent attainment' (*rjes thos, prṣṭha-labdha*)⁶⁸ now, with true enlightenment, achieve a perfect equilibrium. Previously, the wisdom of the meditative equipoise is directed more towards ultimate truth, while the wisdom of the subsequent achievement (post-meditative state) is directed more towards empirical truth. The knowledge of the two truths is thereby somehow isolated. However, with the attainment of Buddhahood, the cognitive capacity to engage with ultimate truth and the cognitive capacity to engage with conventional truth becomes simultaneous. Tsong khapa argues that "Once the predisposition of the conception of true existence is thoroughly eradicated, one attains the Buddhahood. Thereafter", he explains that "[a buddha] continuously abides in the meditative equipoise, directly realising ultimate truth. Thereafter the alternate [realisation]—i.e., not abiding in the meditative equipoise in their subsequent attainment—no longer applies".⁶⁹ In other words, whether or not a buddha appears to be in a meditative equipoise or appears to be engaged in other overt activities, the mind of an enlightened being is not deflected from direct knowledge of the two truths. Consequently, Tsong khapa therefore claims, in the following passage, that there is no qualitative distinction whatsoever between a

buddha's wisdom of the meditative equipoise and a buddha's wisdom of the subsequent achievement (the post meditative state):

Because there is no wisdom of the subsequent attainment (*rjes tho yeshes*, *Prṣṭha-labdha-jñāna*) realising phenomenal objects (*je snyed pa*) which is qualitatively distinct (*ngo bo tha dad med*) from the wisdom of meditative equipoise (*mnyam gzhaq yeshes*, *samāhita-jñāna*), it should be accepted that a single event of wisdom (*yeshes gcig*) knows all objects of knowledge comprising two truths.⁷⁰

With the end of the alternate (*res 'jog*) realisation of two truths,⁷¹ the usual qualitative distinction between the cognitive status of the meditative equipoise and the post-meditative state no longer applies. Whether an enlightened being specifically engages in the meditation of ultimate truth or engages in other seemingly non-meditative cognitive activities, his wisdom invariably knows both truths. The validity of every enlightened cognitive episode is equivalent to the validity of meditative equipoise, and thus every enlightened cognitive activity is representative of a correct knowledge of ultimate truth.

Tsong khapa's claim that there is no qualitative distinction between the wisdom of meditative equipoise and the wisdom of the post-meditative equipoise gives rise to a couple of questions: If it is true that every single enlightened consciousness knows both the truths directly, does this mean that a buddha's empirically valid cognition alone is able to cognise ultimate

truth independently of the role of his ultimately valid cognition? Similarly, does this mean that a buddha's ultimately valid cognition alone is able to cognise conventional truth independently from the role of his empirically valid cognition?

In response to the first question, Tsong khapa says that it is not possible for the ultimately valid consciousness of a buddha to know conventional truth independently of empirically valid consciousness, and this is so for two reasons. First, if a buddha's ultimately valid consciousness knows conventional truth independently, then it would render the cognitive role of a buddha's empirically valid consciousnesses redundant, but Tsong khapa takes the function of verifying empirical truths to belong to empirically valid consciousness. Second, if a buddha's ultimately valid consciousness knows conventional truth independently, then this would threaten the internal consistency of Tsong khapa's own definitions of conventional truth, since Tsong khapa defines conventional truth in relation to the function of empirically valid consciousness.

In response to the second question, Tsong khapa argues that the empirically valid consciousness of an enlightened person is not able to know ultimate truth independently from ultimately valid consciousnesses, and this is so, once again, for the two reasons that are analogous to those just cited. First, if the empirically valid consciousness of an enlightened person knows

ultimate truth independently of ultimately valid consciousness, then this would render the cognitive role of a buddha's ultimately valid consciousness redundant, but Tsong khapa himself assigns the verification of ultimate truth as the function of ultimately valid consciousness. Second, if the empirically valid consciousness of an enlightened person knows ultimate truth independently of ultimately valid consciousness, then this would threaten the internal consistency of Tsong khapa's definitions of ultimate truth, since Tsong khapa has previously defined ultimate truth in relation to the cognitive function of ultimately valid consciousness.

It is worth giving some further consideration to Tsong khapa's defense of the claim that even the two valid consciousnesses of an enlightened being do not involve knowledge of ultimate truth in a way that is independent of one another. Although, insofar as both wisdoms are invariably valid representations of ultimate truth, the wisdom of the meditative equipoise and of the post-meditative state are both accepted as qualitatively identical (*ngo bo gcig*), Tsong khapa denies that this poses any contradiction. According to him, this identity neither makes the two wisdoms redundant nor threatens the internal consistency of the definitions of the two truths. While qualitatively identical, the two wisdoms are also distinct in terms of their mode of cognitive activity:

Because [an object] is found by the wisdom knowing truths as they truly are (*je lta ba mkhyen pa'i yeshes*) it is a wisdom knowing truths as

they truly are (*je lta ba, yathā*) with respect to that object. And because [an object] is found by wisdom knowing phenomenal objects (*je snyad pa mkhyen pa'i yeshes*), it is a wisdom knowing phenomenal objects (*je snyed pa, yavāta*) with respect to that object. Therefore, an enlightened mode of knowing ultimate and conventional truths should be understood with reference to the individual objects (*yul so so la ltos nas*).⁷²

Despite the fact that the ultimately valid consciousness of an enlightened being is a coherent representation of conventional truth, still, according to Tsong khapa's view, conventional truth *per se* is not found or verified by the ultimately valid consciousness of such a being. Rather, the ultimately valid consciousness of an enlightened being critically verifies the ultimate truth of the empirically given phenomena that is found by empirically valid consciousness. Because of its critical cognitive function, the ultimately valid consciousness of a buddha cannot provide a holistic view of the world. But a holistic view is essential to establish the validity of conventional truth. In the light of its critical function, the ultimately valid consciousness of an enlightened being is consistently described as the 'wisdom that knows phenomena as they truly are' (*ji lta ba bzhin du mkhyen pa'i yeshes, yathā-bhūta-jñāna*) as opposed to being described as the 'wisdom that realises empirical phenomena' (*ji snyed pa mkhyen pa'i yeshes, yavāta-jñāna*). Likewise, despite the fact that the empirically valid consciousness of an enlightened being is a coherent representation of ultimate truth, ultimate truth *per se* is not found or

verified by a buddha's empirical consciousness. The empirically valid consciousness of a buddha verifies, instead, conventional truth. Because of its uncritical cognitive function, the empirically valid consciousness of a buddha consistently represents its corresponding objects holistically. It is, therefore, always described as the wisdom that realises the plurality of phenomenal objects (*ji snyed pa mkhyen pa'i yeshes, yavāta-jñāna*) and, strictly speaking, is not described as the wisdom that realises things as they truly are (*ji lta ba bzhin du mkhyen pa'i yeshes, yathā- bhūta-jñāna*).

At the heart of Tsong khapa account, then, is his claim that every single enlightened consciousness knows the two truths simultaneously; hence both the empirically valid consciousness and the ultimately valid consciousness of a buddha are coherent representations of the two truths. Yet even so, Tsong khapa argues, neither the ultimately valid consciousness nor the empirically valid consciousness of a buddha knows the two truths independently of one another. Instead, the cognitive resources of a buddha operate simultaneously and collaboratively in the knowledge of either one of the two truths. Moreover, in consideration of the fact that the truths are said to exhaustively encapsulate the four noble truths (wherein the truth of suffering, the truth of origin, the truth of the path are classified under the conventional truth and the truth of cessation under the ultimate truth), Tsong khapa's claim that every single episode of enlightened consciousness concurrently knows the

two truths has some powerful canonical support. The Buddha, for example, states that: "Bhikkhus, he who sees suffering sees also the origin of suffering, sees also the cessation of suffering, sees also the way leading to the cessation of suffering" [SN V.437], etc., and so the same understanding should be applied to all the other three truths.⁷³ The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* adds that: "the knowledge of one who possesses the path is knowledge of suffering and it is knowledge of the origin of suffering and it is knowledge of the cessation of suffering and it is knowledge of the way leading to the cessation of suffering" [Ps. I. 119].⁷⁴ Buddhagośa also explains that: "at the times of penetrating to the truths each of the four knowledges is said to exercise four functions in a single moment. These are full-understanding, abandoning, realising, and developing".⁷⁵ Just as a lamp performs four functions simultaneously in a single moment, so too, argues Buddhagośa, does knowledge penetrate to the four truths simultaneously. As the lamp burns the wick, so knowledge fully understands suffering; as the lamp dispels darkness, so the knowledge abandons origin; as the lamp makes light appear, so the knowledge as right-view develops the path; and as the lamp consumes up the oil, so the knowledge realises cessation which brings defilements to an end.

It is very clear indeed that even the so-called 'exceptional way of knowing the two truths by a buddha' does not, according to the view held by Tsong khapa, go against the definitions of the two truths. Neither does it

make the cognitive functions of the two valid consciousnesses of an enlightened person redundant. The empirically valid consciousness of an enlightened person uncritically verifies empirical truths, while ultimately valid consciousness critically verifies the ultimate mode of empirical truths. But because the two cognitive resources are inextricably interwoven, every enlightened consciousness is a culmination of the two wisdoms. Every event of enlightened consciousness coherently represents things as they truly are. This is how, in Tsong khapa's view, even the most enlightened wisdom operates within the framework of the definitions of the two truths, while nevertheless achieving the realisation of both the truths simultaneously. In so doing, it avoids all contradictions. "Such is the exceptional qualities of a bhagvān, a buddha", says Tsong khapa:⁷⁶

With the reference to *dharmatā* (*chos nyid*), it is a wisdom knowing things as they are (*je lta ba*). Here, every dual-appearance dissolves from the vantage point of that cognition (*blo de'i ngor*). Thus this wisdom, just like pouring water into water, embraces the universality (*ro gcig*). However, with respect to the phenomenal objects (*chos can*, *dharmān*), it is a wisdom knowing empirical truths (*je snyed pa mkhyen pa'i yeshe*). At this point, though the dualistic appearances perceiving distinct subject and object are involved, they are unmistakable dualistic appearances. Since the predisposition of the misconception pertaining to dualistic appearance is uprooted without trace, dualistic appearances are no longer misconception of the perceived object (*snang yul*).⁷⁷

In Tsong khapa's view, then, an enlightened being has two different ways of knowing ultimate truth. One way is to realise it during the meditative equipoise by way of transcending all dualities. This way of knowing ultimate truth is described as knowing space-like-emptiness (*nam mkha' lta bu'i stong nyid*).⁷⁸ Ultimate truth is known through direct personal experience within the framework of one's body. As the Buddha explains:

Monks, that sphere should be realised where the eye (vision) stops and the perception (mental noting) of form fades. That sphere is to be realised where the ear stops and the perception of sound fades...where the nose stops and the perception of aroma fades...where the tongue stops and the perception of flavour fades...where the body stops and the perception of tactile sensations fades...where the intellect stops and the perception of idea fades: That sphere should be realised [SN XXXV.116].⁷⁹

For Tsong khapa this sphere of non-differentiated, space-like experience does not in any way represent a metaphysical transcendence. The experience of such nature is entirely possible within the meditator's own "fathom-long body", as the Buddha puts it.⁸⁰ This transcendental state can be directly and personally experienced, but it cannot be intellectually known or linguistically described from the outside and neither can an enlightened person, even when actually experiencing it, offer any criterion to describe it. In the following discourse, the Buddha articulates this point:

There is, monks, that sphere where there is neither earth nor water, nor fire, nor wind, nor sphere of the infinitude of space, nor sphere of the infinitude of consciousness, nor sphere of nothingness, nor sphere of neither perception nor non-perception, nor this world, nor the next world, nor sun, nor moon. And there, I say, there is neither coming, nor going, nor stasis, nor passing away, nor arising: without stance, without foundation, without support (mental object). This, just this, is the end of *dukkha* [Ud VIII.1].⁸¹

What is All? Simply the eye and forms, ear and sounds, nose and aromas, tongue and flavours, body and tactile, sensation, intellect and ideas. This, monks, is termed the All. Anyone who would say, 'Repudiating this All, I will describe another,' if questioned on what exactly might be the grounds for this statement, would be unable to explain, and furthermore, would be put to grief. Why? Because it lies beyond range [SN XXXV.23].⁸²

As a flame overthrown by the force of the wind goes to an end that cannot be classified, so the sage freed from naming (mental) activity goes to an end that cannot be classified...One who has reached the end has no criterion by which anyone would say that—for him it does not exist. When all phenomena are done away with, all means of speaking are done away with as well [*Upāsiva-māṇava-pucchā*, Sn V6].⁸³

The other way of knowing ultimate truth is during the subsequent attainment in the wake of meditative equipoise. Tsong khapa describes this way of realising ultimate truth as "knowing the illusion-like-emptiness (*sgyu ma lta bu'i stong nyid*)".⁸⁴ In this mode of knowing, argues Tsong khapa, phenomena are perceived as relational, interdependent, and illusory. Although the duality between subject and object is involved in this mode of knowing, it is

thoroughly compatible with the non-dual enlightened knowledge.⁸⁵ The Buddha explains why knowing phenomena as dependently arisen does not constitute a misconceived duality:

When a disciple of the noble one has seen well with right discernment this dependent co-arising and these dependently co-arisen phenomena as they are actually present, it is not possible that he would run after the past, thinking, "Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past?" or that he would run after the future, thinking, "Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?" or that he would be inwardly perplexed about the immediate present, thinking, "Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?" Such a thing is not possible. Why is that? Because the disciple of the noble ones has seen well with discernment this dependent co-arising and these dependently co-arisen phenomena as they are actually present [*Paccaya Sutta*, SN XII.20].⁸⁶

Since the duality between subject and object is totally free from any misconception, the mere presence of duality is not a problem. It is, in fact, an inevitable ground for coherent knowledge. "Once this point is understood", says Tsong khapa, "one can correctly understand how the meditation on the space-like-emptiness during the meditative equipoise reinforces the understanding of illusory-like-emptiness in the subsequent attainment".⁸⁷ The validity of knowing the illusory-like-emptiness and the validity of knowing the space-like-emptiness are therefore compatible in every respect.⁸⁸ By

knowing phenomena as illusory a buddha knows that phenomena are essentially empty; by knowing phenomena as essentially empty a buddha knows that phenomena are illusory. Hence, in Tsong khapa's view "there is no contradiction in saying that every single enlightened wisdom captures all objects of knowledge".⁸⁹

4. Goramapa's position reconsidered

Go rampa's account of enlightened wisdom grants to such wisdom an absolute, non-dual, metaphysically transcendent and timeless ontological status that is utterly free from any cognitive activity and is strictly beyond any empirical experience whatsoever. Yet in proposing such an account, and if such an account is a correct one, Go rampa not only questions, but perhaps inadvertently invalidates, the position taken by the Buddha himself in terms of his ontological, epistemological, ethical and soteriological standpoints. As we shall see, Go rampa's position contradicts the credibility of the Buddha's enlightenment, the path of the practice taught by the Buddha, and the moral and intellectual virtues attributed to an enlightened being. In the next three sections we shall briefly examine how and in what ways Go rampa's view is indeed contradictory to the position taken by the Buddha.

4.1. On the Buddha's enlightenment

As long as I did not have direct knowledge of the fourfold round with regard to these five aggregates of clinging/sustenance, I did not claim to have directly awakened to the unexcelled right self-awakening. But when I did have direct knowledge of the fourfold round with regard to these five aggregates of clinging/sustenance, then I did claim to have directly awakened to the unexcelled right self-awakening in this cosmos [*Parivatta Sutta*, SN XXII.56].⁹⁰

As the above statement indicates, the Buddha declares the legitimacy of his full enlightenment by emphasising his fourfold knowledge of empirical truths. And he explains in what this fourfold knowledge consists: "I had direct knowledge of form...of the origination of form...of the cessation of form...of the path of practice leading to the cessation of form (likewise with regard to four other aggregates)..." [*Parivatta sutta*, SN XXII.56].⁹¹ Within each knowledge, all the four knowledges are contained. To attain one of the fourfold knowledges, for example, the direct knowledge of aggregates of form, the presence of the other three direct knowledges is necessary. If any one of the fourfold direct knowledges is not completed, then all the rest remain incomplete also. On the other hand, when any one of the fourfold direct knowledge is completed, all the rest become complete and attain full maturity. This is how, in the Buddha's view, the attainment of the fourfold knowledges is simultaneous. "Bhikkhus, he who sees suffering sees also the

origin of suffering, sees also the cessation of suffering, sees also the way leading to the cessation of suffering" [SN V.437] etc., and so the same understanding should be applied to all the other three truths.⁹² As the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* further states: "the knowledge of one who possesses the path is knowledge of suffering and it is knowledge of the origin of suffering and it is knowledge of the cessation of suffering and it is knowledge of the way leading to the cessation of suffering" [Ps. I. 119].⁹³

There is no ambiguity when the Buddha announces his full enlightenment precisely because of his understanding of the five aggregates. Thus it is clear that the attainment of enlightenment must entail the perfect understanding of conventional truths as they actually are. The Buddha reaffirms his position by describing a correct understanding of the five psychophysical aggregates in terms of the achievement of "right practice". "For any priests or contemplatives who directly know form in this way,⁹⁴ directly know the origination of form in this way, directly know the cessation of form in this way, directly know the path of the cessation of form in this way, are" according to the Buddha, "practising for disenchantment—dispassion—cessation with regard to form, [hence] they are practising rightly" [*Parivatta Sutta*, SN XXII.56].⁹⁵ What constitutes right practice is precisely that it is a practice based on the understanding of phenomena, processes, and events as they actually are. Right practice entails

liberating wisdom principally because right practice is founded on the direct knowledge of what is empirically given, namely, the five psychophysical aggregates.

Since right practice is premised on the right understanding of empirical truths as they are, the Buddha also describes right practice as the key to moral perfection free from negative psychological impulses: "Those who are practising rightly are firmly based in this doctrine and discipline...From disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, lack of clinging/sustenance with regard to form—released, they are well-released. Those who are well-released are fully accomplished" [*Parivatta Sutta*, SN XXII.56].⁹⁶ Elsewhere the Buddha explains: "Disenchantment, monks, also has supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for disenchantment? 'The knowledge and vision of things as they really are should be the reply'" [*Upanisa Sutta*, SN XII.23].⁹⁷ Furthermore he adds: "The destruction of the cankers, monks, is for one who knows and sees, I say, not for one who does not know and does not see".⁹⁸

All of the above quotations indicate that the attainment of full enlightenment, according to the Buddha's teaching, means the culmination of the fourfold knowledge within the framework of one's own psychophysical aggregates. "It is just within this fathom-long body, with its consciousness, that I declare that there is the cosmos, the origination of the cosmos, and the

path of practice leading to the cessation of cosmos" [*Rohitassa Sutta*, AN IV.45].⁹⁹ There can be, then, no uncertainty concerning the fact that the Buddha justifies his full enlightenment on the basis of the fourfold knowledge of empirical truths. Yet if we approach the rationale behind the Buddha's justification of his enlightenment from the soteriological standpoint taken by Go rampa, then we reach a totally opposite conclusion. All conventional phenomena, Go rampa claims, are the constructs of ignorance and this is at the very heart of his philosophy of non-duality. Any knowledge having reference to conventional phenomena has, therefore, no soteriological significance whatsoever. Since aggregates are conventional phenomena, and since conventional phenomena are the constructs of ignorance, it thus follows that the knowledge of aggregates entails merely the proliferation of ignorance. Consequently, the Buddha's announcement of his enlightenment on the basis of his understanding of aggregates can only indicate, on the basis of Go rampa's account, the Buddha's ignorance rather than justifying his enlightenment.

4.2. On the path of practice taught by the Buddha

In his forty-five year's of service to humanity, the Buddha is known to have given at least eighty two thousand discourses (excluding two thousands discourses given by senior disciples). He extended his open invitation to all.

He said 'come and see', *ehipassiko* (Pāli), examine, verify, test and personally experience the *dharma*. In Pāli he describes *dharma* as *svākkhāto* 'well explained', *sandiṭṭhiko* 'to be personally realised', *akāliko* 'to be experienced here and now, with immediate result', *opanayika* 'capable of being entered upon', *paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhiti* 'to be attained by the wise, each for himself'. The Buddha saw his role as a discoverer of Dharma, a skilful teacher and an expounder of Dharma. He employed various skilful pedagogical means to explain the Dharma he had discovered in order to guide any aspirant to the ultimate spiritual quest. From all this, perhaps the most well-known techniques are the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment (*Bodhipachika Dharma*, *byang phyogs so bdun*).

Briefly,¹⁰⁰ the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment consist of seven-sets of practices: namely, the four foundations of mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*, *dran pa nyer bzhas bzhi*); the four right exertions (*samīyakaprahāṇanī*, *yang dag spong ba*); the four factors of psychic powers (*rddhipādāḥ*, *rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa*), the five faculties (*endriyāṇi*, *dbang po*); the five strengths (*bala*, *stobs*), the seven factors of awakening (*sambodhyaṅga*, *byang chub yan lag*); and the eightfold noble path (*āryaṣṭāṅgamārga*, *'pags lam yan lag brgyad*). All practices entailed in the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment can be circumscribed within one of the three trainings (*Śikṣā*, *bslab pa gsum*): namely, morality (*śīla*, *tshul khrims*), concentration (*samādhi*, *ting nge 'dzin*) and wisdom (*prajñā*, *shes*

rab). These three in turn can be further broken down into two key practices, namely, *śamatha* (*zhi gnas*), meaning, 'calm abiding' meditation and *vipaśyanā* (*lhag mthong*), meaning, 'penetrating insightful' meditation. Given the fact that the former is found in other traditions, notably in Brahmanism,¹⁰¹ the latter forms the most distinctive feature of Buddhism. In the Pāli canon, the Buddha extols *vipaśyanā* as "the only way" leading to the ultimate goal and prescribes *Satipaṭṭhānas* (Pāli; Stk. *smṛtyupasthāna*, Tib. *dran pa nyer bzhaḡ bzhi*), 'the four foundations of mindfulness', as the four main methods by which one practises *vipaśyanā*.

Monks, this is the one and only way for the purification (of minds) of beings, for overcoming sorrow and lamentation, for the complete destruction of pain and stress, for attainment of the noble (arya) Magga, and for the realisation of Nibbāna. That (only way) is the practice of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, *Satipaṭṭhāna*.¹⁰²

What are the four *Satipaṭṭhānas* and how are they practised? The Buddha answers: "Herein, a monk dwells observing body in the body...sensations in sensations...the mind in the mind...and mental objects in the mental objects, ardently with awareness and mindfulness, thus keeping away craving and sorrow in regard to the world" [*Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, DN 16].¹⁰³ A special emphasis on "observing body in body..." etc. is highly significant. It indicates that a correct *vipaśyanā* meditation should strictly involve observing one's psychophysical aggregates starkly as they really are. Since the four

foundations of mindfulness operate entirely within one's experiential domain, they are the only ways to directly understand the phenomena as impermanent, unsatisfactory, selfless, and empty and thereby to abandon the distorted perception of permanence, substantially persisting self, and inherently existing essence.

Consider this following familiar passage in *The Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra*, the *Bhagavatiprajñāpāramitāhṛdayasūtra*. In this sūtra exactly the same technique of insightful meditation is prescribed. When the venerable Śāriputra asked the noble Avalokiteśvara, "how should a son of good lineage who wishes to practice the profound perfection of wisdom train?" the latter offers this advice:

Śāriputra, a son of good lineage or a daughter of good lineage who wishes to practice the profound perfection of wisdom should perceive things in this way: form is empty; emptiness is form. Emptiness is not other than form; form is not other than emptiness. In the same way, feeling, discrimination, conditioning factors, and consciousness are empty. Therefore, Śāriputra, all phenomena are empty, without characteristic, unproduced, unceased, stainless, not stainless, undiminished, unfilled...Śāriputra, a bodhisattva *mahāsattva* should train in the profound perfection of wisdom in that way.¹⁰⁴

The Buddha, being impressed by the advice, expressly endorses noble Avalokiteśvara's words: "Well said, well said, child of good lineage, it is like that. It is like that; the practice of the profound perfection of wisdom is just as

you have taught it".¹⁰⁵ It is clear, then, that the only way to cultivate the perfection of wisdom is by engaging in the practice of *vipāśyanā*. That means even the most superior knowledge, as the *Heart Sūtra* indicates, inevitably requires the five psychological aggregates as its foundation, and the interactions between the cognising subject and the cognised object.

Yet once again, if we adopt Go rampa's non-dual perspective, any knowledge that allows empirical grounding, cognitive activities, and the subject-object dichotomy, must be viewed as necessarily flawed. In that case the path of practice taught by the Buddha must also be viewed as a flawed one just inasmuch as this path retains the usual subject-object dichotomy and allows for the persistence of cognitive activity. Perhaps more importantly, the Buddha insists on the psychophysical aggregates as the foundation of even the highest knowledge, such that even a fully perfected wisdom cannot lead to metaphysical non-duality, while Go rampa maintains that to take the aggregates as the basis of knowledge is tantamount to taking ignorance as the basis rather than wisdom and so the defining criterion of enlightenment must, in Go rampa's view, be the achievement of metaphysical non-duality.

4.3. On the virtues of a *Tathāgata*

Another distinctive feature of Go rampa's non-dual soteriological account is the doctrine of perspectivism. This doctrine is arbitrarily introduced at the

last stage of the path in order to account for the virtues attributed to a buddha. Here, Go rampa introduces two theses: first, he argues that a buddha, since he has no conventional knowledge, does not have any perspective on the conventional world of his own whatsoever; second, he argues that a buddha, since he knows the conventional world only from the other's perspective and reifies conventional truth just as any ordinary person, mistakenly conceives and reifies essences. Similarly, he claims that all sets of virtues attributed to a buddha are also purely from the other's perspective.

In order to get a better picture of the qualities attributed to a buddha, and thereby to enable us to contrast them with Go rampa's soteriological account, we shall simply consider some of the lists of the virtues attributed to an enlightened being. As physical hallmarks, a buddha is attributed with sixty vocal qualities¹⁰⁶ and thirty-two major marks (*mtshan bzang po sum bcu rtsa gnyis*)¹⁰⁷ and eighty minor marks (*dpe byed bzang po brgyad bcu*).¹⁰⁸ As intellectual hallmarks, a buddha is attributed with many lists of virtues. First is the list of the ten powers (*daśa bala, stobs bcu*). In the *Mahāvastu*, when the venerable Mahā-Kāśyapa asked Mahā-Kātyāyana on the ten powers of a buddha, the latter offers the following list:¹⁰⁹ A buddha knows what is and what is not a causal occasion; knows whither every course of conduct tends; knows various elements which make up the world; knows the diverse characters of beings; knows the merits of the conduct of other being; knows

the good and bad force of karma; knows the fault and purification of attainments in meditation; knows many modes of his former lives; a buddha becomes endowed with the clear deva eye; and finally, attains the destruction of all defiling lusts [MN. 12; AN X. 21]. Second, a buddha is also attributed with the eighteen unparalleled cognitive skills (*aṣṭādaśāveṇika buddha dharmāḥ*, *sangs rgyas kyi chos ma 'dres pa bco brgyad*), Mahā-Kātyāyana offers the following list:¹¹⁰ A buddha has an infallible knowledge and insight of the past; the future; the present; all his acts of body; speech; and thought are based on knowledge and concerned with knowledge; there is no falling off in resolution; in energy; in mindfulness, in concentration; in insight; in freedom; there is no faltering; no impetuosity; mindfulness never fails; mind is never disturbed; no thoughtless indifference; and there is no preoccupation with the multiplicity of phenomena. Third, a buddha is also endowed with the four analytical knowledges (*pratisamvidah-jñāna*, *so so yang dag pa'i rigs pa bzhid*): namely, the analytical knowledge of the doctrine (*dharmapratīsamvidah*, *chos so sor yang dag pa'i rig pa*); the analytical knowledge of meaning (*arthapratīsamvidah*, *don so sor yang dag pa'i rig pa*); the analytical knowledge of the language (*niruktipratīsamvidah*, *nges tshig so sor yang pa'i rig pa*); and the analytical knowledge of perspicacity (*pratbhānapratīsamvidah*, *spop pa so sor yang dag pa'i rig pa*) (AN IV:173). Fourth, perhaps the most commonly known qualifications attributed to a buddha, reflecting both moral and intellectual

prowess, are the six perfections (*pāramitā*, *phar phyin bcu*)¹¹¹—namely, perfection of generosity (*dānapāramitā*, *sbyin pa'i phar phyin*); morality (*śīlapāramitā*, *tshul khrims kyi phar phyin*); patience (*Kṣānti*, *bzod pa*); energy (*virya*, *brtson grus*); serenity (*dhyāna*, *bsam gtan*); and wisdom (*prajñā*, *shes rab*). In emphasising moral perfection, a buddha is attributed with another set of virtues. The key moral virtue being *bodhicitta* (*byang chub kyi sems*)—altruistic mind of enlightenment and the culmination of the fourfold divine virtues (*Brahmavihāras*, *tshangs pa'i gnas*), namely, equanimity (Pāli *upekha*; Skt *upekṣā*); compassion (*karuṇā*); loving-kindness (Pāli *metta*; Skt *maitrī*); appreciative-joy (*muditā*).

There are other lists of moral and intellectual virtues attributed to a buddha which could be added here, but these lists are more than sufficient to enable us to assess Go rampa's claim that the intellectual and moral virtues attributed to a buddha exist only as projections of ignorant and misguided disciples and that a buddha is transcendent of both moral and intellectual virtues. It should be especially noted that in relation to these lists, there is no ambiguity whatsoever that the relevant virtues are attributed directly to an enlightened person—there is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that these moral and intellectual virtues are merely attributed from the others' perspective. In fact, curiously, there is not even a mention of transcendental virtues in any of the lists. Consider how the Buddha himself describes the

attributes of an enlightened being: "This, monk, the Tathāgata discerns. And he discerns that these standpoints, thus seized, thus held to, lead to such and such destination, to such and such a state in the world beyond. And he discerns what surpasses this" [*Brahmajāla sutta*, DN 1].¹¹² The Buddha is also unequivocal in stating that a buddha knows about things through his own wisdom, rather than relying on the so-called 'others' perspective':

The Tathāgata—a worthy one, rightly self-awakened—directly knows earth as earth. Directly knowing earth as earth, he does not conceive things about earth, does not conceive things in earth, does not conceive things coming out of earth, does not conceive earth as 'mine', does not delight in earth. Why is that? Because that Tathagata has comprehended it to the end, I tell you [*Mūlapariyāya Sutta*, MN. 1].¹¹³

It is also worth drawing attention to the problems inherent in Go rampa's transcendental thesis in relation to the two truths. As it is a standard Mādhyamika position to classify every object of knowledge into either conventional or ultimate truth, it is necessary for Go rampa to follow suit. Go rampa cannot however, classify the intellectual and moral virtues of a buddha as conventional phenomena. To do so would be tantamount to accepting conventional truth as having soteriological significance. This would directly undermine his own transcendental thesis, since in advancing the idea of a transcendental enlightened being, Go rampa also rejects the epistemological and ontological correlation of such a being with the

conventional world. Nor can Go rampa classify these virtues under the categories of ultimate truth, since being an avowed monist, he does not accept any other category of ultimate truth except its non-dual character. Moreover, the achievement of enlightenment presupposes the achievement of physical and mental qualities attributed to an enlightened being, which are, by definition, conventional phenomena. While Go rampa's transcendental thesis rules out the correlation between enlightenment and the enlightened virtues, a coherent account of enlightenment surely requires, of necessity, a correlation between these two. It is not possible to have the enlightened being without the enlightened virtues. In short, the transcendental thesis advanced by Go rampa absurdly attempts to validate the attainment of enlightenment by invalidating the criteria that define enlightenment—by rejecting the enlightened virtues, surely enlightenment itself is rejected also. It would seem clear, then, that Go rampa's notion that enlightenment utterly transcends conventional truth is not only contradictory to the spirit of the Buddha's teachings, but is also logically absurd and practically impossible.

4.4. Does a *Tathāgata* exist after death?

The problems with Go rampa's transcendental position do not, however, end with these problems concerning the virtues of a *Tathāgata*. That position is also profoundly in conflict with the Buddha's discourses in their emphasis on

the ontological issues relating to the *Tathāgata*. Since Go rampa advocates a view of an enlightened being as one who is metaphysically transcendent and non-empirical, so the only way he could possibly account for the existence of such an enlightened being is to advance the thesis that the *Tathāgata* emerges and endures only after death. Such a thesis is hardly sustainable. Consider the following discourse wherein Śāriputra explains that *Tathāgata* is not posited as separate from the five aggregates:

(Śāriputra): “How do you construe this: Do you regard form as the *Tathāgata*? Do you regard feeling as the *Tathāgata*? Do you regard perception as the *Tathāgata*? Do you regard mental fabrication as the *Tathāgata*? Do you regard consciousness as the *Tathāgata*?” (Yamaka): “No, my friend”. (Śāriputra): “How do you construe this: Do you regard the *Tathāgata* as being in form?...Elsewhere than form?...In feeling?... Elsewhere than feeling?...In perception?...In fabrications?...Elsewhere than fabrications?...In consciousness?...Elsewhere than consciousness?” (Yamaka): “No, my friend”. (Śāriputra): “How do you construe this: Do you regard the *Tathāgata* as form-feeling-perception-fabrications-consciousness?” (Yamaka): “No, my friend”. (Śāriputra): “Do you regard the *Tathāgata* as that which is without form, without feeling, without perception, without fabrications, without consciousness?” (Yamaka): “No, my friend”. (Śāriputra):

“And so, my friend Yamaka—when you cannot pin down the *Tathāgata* as a truth or reality even in the present life—is it proper for you to declare, “As I understand the teaching explained by the Blessed One, a monk with no more defilements, on the break-up of the body, is annihilated, perishes, and does not exist after death?” (Yamaka): “Previously, my friend Śāriputra, I did foolishly hold that evil

supposition. But now, having heard your explanation of the Dhamma, I have abandoned that evil supposition, and have broken through to the Dhamma [*Yamaka Sutta*, SN XXII.85].¹¹⁴

Should we approach this dialogue from Go rampa's transcendental perspective, Śāriputra and Yamaka must be taken to have completely misinterpreted the ontological issues related to *tathāgata*. While they conclude that a *tathāgata* is dependent on his aggregates, and cannot be pinned down as an independent entity, from Go rampa's transcendental perspective, the existence of *tathāgata* does not depend upon the aggregates—a *tathāgata* emerges only after the total elimination of the five aggregates. Likewise, consider the Buddha's following discourse with Anurādha concerning the nature of *tathāgata*:

"And so, Anurādha—when you cannot pin down the Tathāgata as a truth or reality even in the present life—is it proper for you to declare, 'Friends, the Tathāgata—the supreme man, the superlative man, attainer of the superlative attainment—being described, is described otherwise than with these four positions: The Tathāgata exists after death, does not exist after death, both does and does not exist after death, neither exists nor does not exist after death?' "No lord" [*Anurādha Sutta*, SN XXII.86].¹¹⁵

While the Buddha expressly rejects all the four possible metaphysical positions regarding the nature of Tathāgata without any equivocation, Go rampa proposes the first position, claiming that the Tathāgata is achievable

only after death. Yet when Vacchagotta asked the Buddha if the Tathāgata reappears after death, the Buddha expressly rejects the very idea behind such a proposition:

[The Buddha]: '...I will now put some questions to you. Answer as you see it. How do you construe this, Vaccha: If a fire were burning in front of you, would you know that, "This fire is burning in front of me"?' [Vaccha]: '...yes...' [The Buddha]: 'And suppose some one to ask you, Vaccha, "This fire burning in front of you, dependent on what is it burning?" Thus asked, how would you reply?' [Vaccha]: '...I would reply, "This fire burning in front of me is burning dependent on grass and time as its sustenance". [The Buddha]: 'If the fire burning in front of you were to go out, would you know that "This fire burning in front of me has gone out"?' [Vaccha]: '...yes...'

[The Buddha]: 'And suppose some were to ask you, "This fire that has gone out in front of you, in which direction from here has it gone? East? West? North? Or south?" Thus asked, how would you reply?' [Vaccha]: 'That does not apply, Venerable Gotama. Any fire burning dependent on a sustenance of grass and timber, being unnourished—from having consumed that sustenance and not being offered any other—is classified simply as 'out' (nibbuto).

[The Buddha]: 'Even so, Vaccha, any physical form by which one describing the Tathāgata would describe him: That the Tathāgata has abandoned, its root destroyed, like an uprooted palm tree, deprived of the conditions of existence, not destined for future arising. Freed from that classification of form, Vaccha, the Tathāgata is deep, boundless, hard-to-fathom like the sea. "Reappears" does not apply. "Does not reappear" does not apply. "Both does and does not reappear" does not apply. "Neither reappears and nor does not reappear" does not apply [Aggi-Vacchagotta Sutta, MN 72].¹¹⁶

If Go rampa were right that enlightenment is metaphysically transcendent and non-empirical, then there would be no reason for the Buddha to deny the reappearance of the *Tathāgata* after death—in fact, it would be the most appropriate context for the Buddha to endorse the transcendental thesis. Instead, the Buddha metaphorically demonstrates the conditioned and empirical nature of the *Tathāgata* and explains that an enlightened being is ontologically dependent upon its five aggregates.

At this stage we could ask: But why is the Buddha so persistent in rejecting the four positions? What is wrong with these four theses? To understand the reasons behind the Buddha's categorical rejection of all four positions, we must first understand what these four positions imply. The four positions conceive and reify the essence of the *Tathāgata* in terms of the category of selfhood, assuming that the liberated being is a substantial self. The proponents of the four positions formulate contradictory theses on the basis of that essential self. As Hellmuth Hecker correctly suggests, the first position, “which is conditioned by the craving for existence, maintains that those who have reached the highest goal continue on after death in some metaphysical dimension, either as distinct individuals or as absorbed into some transpersonal spiritual essence”.¹¹⁷ Hecker also rightly points out that “this answer is the one given by most religions, including several later

interpretations of Buddhism".¹¹⁸ The second position—that a *Tathāgata* does not exist after death—reflects the craving for nonexistence, for annihilation. The proponents of this view regard the *Tathāgata* as truly existent self and liberation as the absolute dissolution of that self. Hence, *Tathāgata* is seen as completely annihilated after death.¹¹⁹ The third view seeks a compromise position: everything conditioned and impermanent in a *Tathāgata* would be annihilated at death, but the permanent essence, the *Tathāgata-garbha* would remain. The fourth position attempts to escape the predicament of the first three by formulating a sceptical approach: 'neither-nor' response. Nevertheless, the fourth view is underpinned by the same essentialist assumption that *Tathāgata* is essentially real.¹²⁰

As we saw in the above quotations, "all four formulas have been rejected by the Buddha as wrong-views. They all presuppose that there is an 'I' distinct from the world—an 'I' which is either raised to eternal life or annihilated in the abyss of nothingness", as Dr Hecker concludes.¹²¹ In the Buddha's words, "If anyone were to say with regard to a monk whose mind is thus released that 'the Tathāgata exist after death', is his view, that would be mistaken" [*Mahā-Nidāna Sutta*, DN 15].¹²² Recognising the tendency to hold to the transcendental thesis in Buddhist metaphysicians such as Go rampa, Garfield also argues: "It is to combat this tendency to treat the conventional world as illusion through treating such apparently transcendental entities as

inherently existent that Nāgārjuna develops these final chapter".¹²³ Among those transcendental entities, Garfield points out that "perhaps the most obvious candidate for reification in a Buddhist context is the Buddha himself".¹²⁴ This is where according to Garfield, Nāgārjuna challenges the transcendental thesis: "The Tathāgata is neither the aggregates nor different from the aggregates. The aggregates are not in him, nor is he in the aggregates. He does not possess aggregates. What then is Tathāgata?" [XXII:1].¹²⁵ We can therefore maintain that "the Buddha does not exist inherently in virtue of his own essence. Nor does he exist inherently in virtue of some property of his aggregates or, for that matter, in virtue of anything else that is other, such as an inherently existing buddha-nature or state of nirvāṇa".¹²⁶ Nāgārjuna also concludes: "since he is by nature empty, the thought that a Buddha exists or does not exist after nirvāṇa is not appropriate" [XXII:14].¹²⁷

There seems little doubt, then, that Go rampa's soteriological account is radically incompatible with the position the Buddha has taken to justify his enlightenment, with the path of practice taught by the Buddha, with the moral and intellectual virtues attributed to an enlightened being and with the ontological issues concerning *Tathāgata*.

Conclusion

For both Tsong khapa and Go rampa, there is no doubt that enlightenment represents the *summum bonum* of Buddhism. It represents the most sublime wisdom and virtues. Enlightenment is the completion of the entire spiritual journey, the perfection of the three trainings—morality (*śīla*, *tshul khrims*) concentration (*samādhi*, *bsam gtan*) and wisdom (*prajñā*, *shes rab*). For this reason, the discussion in this chapter is particularly important in that it demonstrates the way in which the differences between Tsong khapa and Go rampa on the nature of the two truths culminate in their understanding of enlightenment itself. Because the two truths are given equal footing, Tsong khapa argues that enlightenment is the culmination of the simultaneous realisations of the two truths by every single event of enlightened wisdom. Tsong khapa characterises this as the distinctive trademark of enlightenment. In contrast, Go rampa argues that ultimate truth and ultimate wisdom have primacy over empirical truth and empirical consciousness. Consequently, for Go rampa, the achievement of enlightenment is the achievement of non-differentiated and non-dual ultimate truth by ultimate wisdom through the transcending of empirical truths and empirical consciousness.

The fundamental criterion of enlightenment is, according to Tsong khapa, a precise knowledge of empirical truths as they actually are.

Knowledge without empirical grounding is, as he argues, flawed and erroneous and such erroneous knowledge cannot be the basis of enlightenment. Knowledge of empirical truths as they are is itself considered equivalent to knowing ultimate truth. The empirical and the ultimate are thus not to be treated as two contradictory forms of knowledge. For Go rampa, however, matters are quite different. Enlightenment, as he presents it, is precisely freedom from empirical truth and empirical knowledge, since both empirical truth and empirical knowledge are conditioned, false, deceptive, and projected by ignorance. Knowing empirical truths and knowing ultimate truth are thus contradictory and independent of one another—indeed, the former has no soteriological significance whatsoever.

Ordinary beings, according to Tsong khapa, do not have direct knowledge of empirical truth, for they always reify truth and presuppose the existence of essence. The fact that the Buddha emphasises the two truths as the twofold noble truths indicates, argues Tsong khapa, that only the noble beings, *āryas* and buddhas have direct knowledge of empirical truth. Only buddhas are said to possess simultaneous knowledge of both the truths and the attainment of such knowledge is characterised as the exceptional cognitive skill of an enlightened person. Once again, however, when we turn to Go rampa, we find a very different story. Ordinary beings, according to Go rampa, have direct knowledge of empirical truths. But, of course, such

knowledge serves no soteriological purpose. In fact, Go rampa treats the direct knowledge of empirical truths as an object to be negated, since this knowledge is due to the operation of ignorance. Go rampa argues that the direct knowledge of empirical truths consists of dualities that interrupt and obstruct *ārya-bodhisattvas* (from eighth to the tenth *bhūmis*), *ārya-śrāvākas* and *ārya-pratyekabuddhas* from embracing the non-dual and transcendental ultimate truth. When all the objects of negation—the entire system of empirical truth and the empirical senses—are abolished, only then does the sublime wisdom of enlightenment dawn. The most exceptional cognitive skill of an enlightened being is, according to Go rampa, the attainment of a complete departure from the empirical world.

An enlightened wisdom, in Tsong khapa's view, manifests itself in two different modes of knowing, both of which are mutually compatible and mutually reinforcing. Enlightened wisdom knows ultimate truth by way of knowing phenomena as dependently arisen. In such wisdom, and the knowledge associated with it, there remains a duality between subject and object. But because this duality does not comprise even the subtlest misconception, it does not constitute a problem. The second mode of knowing by an enlightened wisdom is by way of transcending dualities. This transcendence is, however, strictly epistemological in nature. It operates entirely within the framework of psychophysical aggregates of the

enlightened person himself and does not in any way represent a form of metaphysical transcendence. Go rampa also postulates two different modes of knowing by the enlightened being: knowing from one's own perspective and knowing from the other's perspective. But in contrast to Tsong khapa's account, the modes of knowing are here seen as fundamentally contradictory. Knowing from others' perspective is irrelevant to actual enlightenment and is equated with the knowledge of ordinary beings. Just as ordinary beings reify essence, so does this mode of knowing. However, when an enlightened being knows from his own perspective, then the knowledge is strictly non-differentiated, non-dual and transcendental. Such knowledge does not allow for even the duality between subject and object. Instead a fusion is achieved between metaphysically transcendent ultimate truth and ultimate wisdom. This non-dual state is itself considered to be ultimate knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Inasmuch as Tsong khapa and Go rampa share identical soteriological objectives, employ similar methodologies, employ the same Indian Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika sources, and work within same linguistic and dialectical conventions, so there are undeniable similarities that run throughout their two philosophical systems. From the arguments presented in the preceding five chapters, however, it is also clear that the disagreement between the two Tibetan Mādhyamikas regarding their interpretations of the two truths is equally pervasive. Since they have already been summarised in the conclusions of each of the preceding chapters, I do not intend to restate each of the separate points of disagreement here. Nonetheless, we shall undertake a brief review of the major differences between Tsong khapa and Go rampa's accounts in regard to each of the main areas of soteriology and psychology, ontology, epistemology and also, briefly, morality.

Soteriological and psychological perspectives

It should be noted that neither Tsong khapa nor Go rampa recognise the attainment of nirvāṇa as the highest goal. Since both of them are Mahāyāna advocates, the highest ideal of bodhisattva is always Buddhahood, rather than the *arhathood* of Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. They agree that Buddhahood constitutes the *summum bonum* of Mahāyān practice, which is

attained through the culmination of *rūpakāya*—the consequence of the accumulation of moral virtues, and *dharmakāya*—the consequence of the accumulation of wisdom. However, they each conceive of Buddhahood in radically different ways that correspond to their opposing treatments of the two truths. Even at the level of Buddhahood, Tsong khapa argues for a harmonious relationship between the two truths, while Go rampa rejects such harmony, insisting on the absolute character of ultimate truth and the rejection of conventional truth. Tsong khapa argues that the accomplishment of the ultimate goal provides the most coherent epistemic access to the climactic unity between the two truths and thus the simultaneous knowledge of the two truths is reserved only for the fully enlightened beings. In contrast, Go rampa argues that the accomplishment of the ultimate goal leads to the ultimate breakdown of all the connections between the two truths and thus he holds that realisation of the ultimate disunity between the two truths is a cognitive achievement reserved only for those who reach the highest goal. For Tsong khapa, Tathagāta—one who achieves the highest goal—is a conventional and dependently arisen phenomenon. For Go rampa, however, whosoever achieves the highest goal is non-empirical and utterly unconditioned—hence a Tathagāta is a transcendental and non-dual being.

Since they consider *arhat* as one of the epithets applicable to a buddha, Tsong khapa and Go rampa both take the prior attainment of nirvāṇa as one

of the essential conditions for the attainment of Buddhahood. Superficially, Tsong khapa and Go rampa appear to agree on the psychological transformations that arise as a result of achieving nirvāṇa. Both acknowledge that the psychological dispositions of ordinary beings undergo radical transformations. The unhealthy psychological dispositions of the ordinary state—saṃsāric predispositions—are replaced by the healthy psychological dispositions of the liberated state—the attainment of nirvāṇa. In this way a radical dichotomy is apparent between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Saṃsāra here means 'round of rebirth', literally 'perpetual wandering'—a continual process of birth, growing old, suffering and dying. More precisely, saṃsāra is the unbroken chain of the five psychophysical aggregates. Saṃsāra, as opposed to nirvāṇa, comes to mean psychological bondage, moral corruption and a state of ever restlessness induced by craving, aversion, delusion etc. Nirvāṇa, on the other hand, means 'psychological freedom' or 'moral perfection'. Nirvāṇa (Pāli *nibbāna*, Tib. *mnyang 'das*) literally means 'extinction' (nir+√vā), 'to cease blowing', 'to become extinguished' or 'freedom from desire' (nir+vāṇa). In other words, and as the Buddha defines it, "extinction of greed, extinction of hate, extinction of delusion is called nibbāna" [SN XXXVIII.1]. In this context, as Kalupahana rightly points out, "nirvāṇa is the 'ultimate fruit' (*paramattha*), and culmination of the fruit (*attha*) of everyday life, the highest moral perfection involving the eschewing of all immoral conduct (*sabb-pāpass*

akaraṇaṃ) and the promotion of good (*kusalassa upasampadā*)".¹ This account fits well with Candrakīrti's treatment of "empirical truth (*tha snyad bden pa*) as a means (*thabs*) while ultimate truth as its result (*thabs byung*)"[VI:80].²

For Tsong khapa, nirvāṇa is antithetical to saṃsāra, particularly when the emphasis is placed on the psychological and moral underpinnings of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Moreover, nirvāṇa is not equated with ultimate truth nor is saṃsāra equated with conventional truth. Since saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are, in this context, contrasted on the basis of their psychological and moral contents, they cannot be equated with the ontology of the two truths. Saṃsāra represents moral bankruptcy, while nirvāṇa represents moral perfection; the former represents psychological ills, while the latter represents freedom from psychological ills. On the other hand, considering Go rampa's commitment to the idea of *ālayavijñāna*, which is said to be the 'fundamental root' of both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—of both primordial awareness and adventitious defilements—it appears that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, on his view, must co-exist at a psychological and moral level.

The ontological perspective

Tsong khapa's ontology treats the two truths as mutually entailing. He argues that the two truths share the same ontological status, and that they are empty and dependently arisen phenomena (*pratityasamutpanna*). The same principle

applies to his ontology of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Since both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are dependently arisen and empty, they stand on an equal ontological footing. Go rampa's ontology treats the two truths as hierarchical and mutually contradictory. He argues that the ontological status of conventional truth and ultimate truth are distinct and independent. The same distinction is applied in the way he treats saṃsāra and nirvāṇa ontologically. While conventional truth and saṃsāra are treated as dependently arisen, and thus as ontologically conditioned (*saṃskṛta*, 'dus byas), Go rampa argues that ultimate truth and nirvāṇa are ontologically unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*, 'dus ma byas) and transcendental. The spirit of Go rampa's transcendental ontology is well expressed in Spiro's words: "From an ontological point of view, Buddhism postulates the existence of two planes which, like parallel lines, never meet. On the one hand there is saṃsāra, the worldly (*lokiya*) plane; on the other hand there is nirvāṇa, the otherworldly (Pāli: *lokuttara*) or transcendental plane".³

The epistemological perspective

The knowledge of conventional and ultimate truths—of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—are, according to Tsong khapa's epistemology, mutually complimentary. They are yoked together and cannot be isolated from one another. Just as the knowledge of conventional truth depends on the

knowledge of ultimate truth, so the knowledge of saṃsāra depends on the realisation of nirvāṇa. One who directly knows conventional truth and saṃsāra as dependently arisen and empty thus also knows ultimate truth and nirvāṇa as dependently arisen and empty. This means that without knowing ultimate truth and nirvāṇa as dependently arisen and empty, it is not possible to know conventional truth and saṃsāra as dependently arisen and empty. In contrast, according to Go rampa's epistemology, knowledge of each of the two truths—of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—is inconsistent with knowledge of the other. The knowledge of conventional truth and saṃsāra as dependently arisen is distinct from and autonomous with respect to the knowledge of ultimate truth and nirvāṇa. The knowledge of conventional truth and saṃsāra as dependently arisen is a mundane knowledge based on a knowledge of both conventional truth and saṃsāra as ontologically conditioned, whereas the knowledge of ultimate truth, and of nirvāṇa, constitutes transcendental knowledge since it is based on knowing ultimate truth and nirvāṇa as ontologically transcendent.

In terms of the epistemological resources by means of which the two truths are verified, the distinctions are again sharply marked. Tsong khapa considers empirically valid cognition and ultimately valid cognition as the two verifying consciousnesses. Although empirically valid cognition verifies conventional truth and ultimately valid cognition ultimate truth, Tsong

khapa holds that empirically valid cognition itself does not know conventional truth. Likewise, ultimately valid cognition itself is not a sufficient condition for knowledge of ultimate truth. In order to have a coherent knowledge of either of the two truths, Tsong khapa argues that the two verifying consciousnesses must support each other. While Tsong khapa sees the mutual support between the two cognitive resources as the absolutely indispensable condition in developing correct knowledge of both conventional and ultimate truth, Go rampa takes a very different approach. He considers ignorance and wisdom as the two verifying consciousnesses—and he sees those two consciousnesses as mutually contradictory and as each operating in a way that is utterly independent the other.

The ethical perspective

The disagreements between Tsong khapa and Go rampa do not stop at the ontological and epistemological levels. There is yet another important perspective from which the differences between them can be pursued. Although this thesis does not directly explore Tsong khapa and Go rampa's treatment of morality, the comparative analysis of the doctrine of the two truths that has been advanced would remain incomplete without some reflection on the ethical implications of the differences between the two

truths. Since Tsong khapa is committed to the mutually compatible relationship between the two truths and the two corresponding cognitive processes, he is also committed to the mutually compatible relationship between non-conceptual wisdom (i.e., meditative equipoise) and conceptual wisdom (i.e., the post-meditative equipoise). Tsong khapa argues that the dualistic cognitive engagements of an enlightened being—namely, the activities of practical orientation—are consistent with non-conceptual wisdom—the wisdom of ultimate truth in a buddha's meditative equipoise. Just as non-conceptual wisdom enhances the authority of conceptual wisdom, so too does the conceptual wisdom of a buddha reinforce the authority of non-conceptual wisdom. In this way, Tsong khapa holds that the elements of the threefold training (*tri-śikṣā*, *blab pa gsum*)—training of morality (*śīlaśikṣā*, *tshul khrmis kyi bslab pa*), training of concentration (*samādhiśikṣā*, *ting nge 'dzin gyi blab pa*), training of wisdom (*prajñāśikṣā*, *shes rab kyi bslab pa*)—each provide support for the other. The intensity of the penetrating wisdom that is geared towards attaining enlightenment arises from concentrated mind. A concentrated mind arises from a firm moral foundation. The eightfold path fused together into the unity of a single cohesive path reflects the fact that the threefold training constitutes a unity of mutually interdependent elements that also support a larger structure—each of the elements that make up that

training makes its own vital contribution to the path that leads towards the ultimate goal.

Tsong khapa maintains that the factors of moral discipline—right speech (*saṃyavāk*, *yang dad pa'i ngag*), right action (*saṃyakkarmānta*, *yang dag pa'i las kyi mtha'*) and right livelihood (*saṃyagājīva*, *yang dag pa'i 'tsho ba*)—keep the tendencies towards ethical transgression in check and thus prevent even the thought of unethical conduct. He argues that by avoiding mental distraction and forgetfulness, the three factors of concentration—right effort (*saṃyagvyāyāma*, *yang dag pa'i rtsol ba*), right mindfulness (*saṃyaksmr̥ti*, *yang dag pa'i dran pa*) and right concentration (*saṃyaksamādhi*, *yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin*)—firmly anchor the mind upon the stream of bodily and mental processes and thus enable the cognitive agent to understand them as impermanent, selfless, and empty characteristics. A firm moral foundation accompanied by a fully concentrated mind leads to the growth of the two types of penetrating wisdom. First is the unfolding of experiential wisdom—the experiential right-view (*saṃyakdr̥ṣṭi*, *yang dag pa'i lta ba*)—that enables the cognitive agent to visualise the five psychophysical aggregates non-conceptually, and thus non-dualistically. Second is the unfolding of conceptual wisdom—the conceptual right-view (*saṃyaksamkalpa*, *yang dag pa'i rtog pa*)—that enables the cognitive agent to make correct conceptual judgements—ontological, moral and epistemological. The resulting benefits

of the development of the two types of penetrating wisdoms show themselves in the purity of psychological, moral and cognitive states.

So far as Tsong khapa is concerned, then, the stages of the eightfold path are only linear in a 'metaphorical sense'. As Damien Keown puts it, "it does not list stages which are to be passed through and left behind so much as describe the dimensions of human good and the technique for their cultivation".⁴ Morality cannot be considered as a platform to enable some form of 'soteriological leap'. It rather forms the heart of the goal itself. The following of this path, as Damien Keown also points out, "is therefore best understood as the gradual cultivation of moral and intellectual virtue. Nirvāṇa is the perfection of these virtues and not an ontological shift or soteriological quantum leap".⁵ Similarly, the scheme of personal development, including practices such as the ten perfections (*daśa-pāramitā*, *phar phyin drug*) which are often expressed using linear metaphors of stages, hurdles, or rungs on a ladder, "can be misunderstood if it is not remembered that each of the stages is part of an overall pattern of cumulative development. Each stage develops out of and includes the previous ones".⁶ It is therefore critical to Tsong khapa's view that the beginning and end of spiritual development must take place in the same continuum of the same person—otherwise, as Keown puts it, "the process could never begin at all".⁷

For the reasons set out above, Tsong khapa always retains a sharp and clear distinction between moral and immoral conduct, and their further ethical implications, all the way through to the consummation of the highest possible spiritual development. In fact, according to Tsong khapa, a buddha is an embodiment of the highest standards of moral integrity and wisdom, both in spirit and in action. This unity between wisdom and morality is justifiable given his commitment to the harmonious relationship of the two truths.

The lesser role accorded to morality in Go rampa's soteriology is not immediately evident. Like Tsong khapa, Go rampa generally affirms the importance of moral conduct as the basic starting point. The essential disagreement between them emerges, not at the outset, but only later—in the way they each evaluate the role of morality in the advanced stages of the path. Morality and enlightenment, so far as Go rampa is concerned, are distinct and can never meet. Morality leads in the direction of enlightenment, but must be finally discarded before enlightenment is attained. Since Go rampa is committed to disparaging conventional truths, arguing that they are projections of ignorance, or total illusions, so conventional practices, including adherence to moral values, are inevitably seen as objects to be discarded. Ultimately morality is irrelevant for the attainment of the soteriological goal—the latter being properly transcendent of moral value.

Go rampa's transcendental thesis seems to be inspired by the Buddha's remarks on the 'parable of the raft' where the Buddha states: "Even so, monks, is the parable of the raft *dhamma* taught by me for crossing over, not for retaining. You, monks, by understanding the parable of the raft, should get rid even of (right) mental objects, all the more of wrong ones" [MN I.134].⁸ Moreover, since transcendental wisdom as such is seen as identical with ultimate truth—which Go rampa characterises as an absolute that is timeless and unaffected by change—so no amount of moral or immoral activity should influence its basic nature. On this account, morality is at best gratuitous with no soteriological significance whatsoever. Go rampa argues that the absolute Tathāgata, transcendental wisdom, transcends all empirical diversity. With the achievement of enlightenment, the distinctions between good and bad, moral and immoral, skilful and unskilful etc., lose their validity. "Such distinctions are valid only at the conventional level, not the level of final realisation; they are binding on the trainee, not on the adept", as Bhikkhu Bodhi pejoratively puts it.⁹

According to this view, the conduct of an enlightened being cannot be circumscribed by moral principles. Sogyal Rinpoche puts this point in particularly forceful fashion: "in the final state of mastery, liberation is like a chief entering an empty house; whatever arises neither harms or benefits a true Dzogchen yogin. Even in the greatest yogin, sorrow and joy still arise

just as before".¹⁰ Inasmuch as an enlightened being has transcended all conventional distinctions of moral and immoral, good and bad, so he acts spontaneously from his intuition of the ultimate non-duality. Thus an enlightened being is, as Bhikkhu Bodhi sarcastically describes it, "no longer bound by the rules of morality valid for those still struggling towards the light. His behaviour is an elusive, incomprehensible outflow of what has been called crazy wisdom".¹¹ In the position taken by Go rampa, moral virtue and all that it represents can only inhibit and obstruct the attainment of the final goal. As King proposes it "[the enlightened being] must kick away from under him the laboriously built ladder of kammic merit from which he has risen towards sainthood, and take to the transcendental flight on the wings of super-normal (super kammic) wisdom".¹² The moral virtue itself "which raises one to such a realm, and the love even of the highest kind of goodness... no matter how much preferable to the love of evil", explains King, "bind him more subtly and dangerously than before to the realm of time and space, that is, birth death and suffering".¹³ So although morality is seen as a necessary condition for the attainment of enlightenment, it is also seen as simultaneously and paradoxically a hindrance to such attainment. Of course, if Go rampa were right in claiming that enlightenment is transcendent of moral virtues, then as Keown puts it, "the Buddha would have passed beyond the possibility of ethical predication and become a moral zero".¹⁴

Paradoxical though such a conclusion may appear, it nevertheless consistently reflects Go rampa's attitudes towards and treatment of conventional truth.

In spite of the fact that this view has many adherents, it is hardly a sustainable one. There is ample evidence in the canon of the way the Buddha continues to characterise himself as being the one who has accomplished and perfected both wisdom and moral virtue. Thus, in the following discourse, the Buddha himself tells Kaśyapa (Skt.) that he is perfect in *śīla*: "There are some Samaṇas and Brāhmaṇas, Kassapa (Pāli), who lay emphasis on morality (*śīla*). They speak in many ways in praise of morality. But so far as regards the most noble and highest morality I know of no one who is equal to myself, much less superior. For it is I who am the foremost in the highest morality (*adhisīla*)" [D.I.174].¹⁵ Similarly the Buddha states: "I, Moggallāna, am perfectly pure in morality and know that I am. I know that my morality is perfectly pure, clean and stainless. My disciples do not supervise me in respect of morality and I do not expect them to" [A.III.126].¹⁶ Elsewhere he speaks of "three things which a Tathāgata has not to guard against: Tathāgata, friends, is pure in conduct whether of act, or speech or thought. There is no misdeed of any kind concerning which he must take care lest another should come to know of it" [D.III.217].¹⁷ The Buddha also tells us that even an *arhat* attains moral perfection and, in fact, goes on to argue that an

arhat has totally uprooted the tendencies to commit any immoral actions: "A monk who has destroyed the *āsavas* [i.e. an *Arahat*] is unable intentionally to kill a living creature, to take by theft that which is not given, to have sexual intercourse, to tell a deliberate lie, or to take pleasure in things stored up, as he did before as a layman" [D.III.235].¹⁸ And again: "The Arahats, as long as they live, abandon the slaying of creatures and hold aloof from it, laying aside the rod and the sword they are modest and kind and dwell friendly and compassionately with all living beings" [A.I.211].¹⁹

If the conduct of a buddha, having transcended morality, were beyond moral circumscription, as Go rampa argues, then it would make no sense for the Buddha to give an evaluation of his or an *arhat*'s moral excellence. Moreover, if a buddha or an *arhat*'s perception of the world was ethically transparent in the way Go rampa suggests it should be, then, in the words of Keown's challenge, "why should what is conventionally described as 'immoral action' be impossible for him? And conversely, why should actions which display moral perfection be the norm in his case"?²⁰ The only satisfactory answer here is to maintain that at the end of the entire spiritual journey, a buddha or an *arhat* "still stands within the same ethical continuum in which he began to tread the path to enlightenment".²¹ The Buddha actually provides a very good description of the scheme of progress from morality to

enlightenment that also fits with the idea that the achievement of moral and soteriological perfection is simultaneous:

So, Ānanda, good moral conduct (*kusalāni-silāni*) has freedom from remorse as its aim and advantage; freedom from remorse has joy; joy has rapture; rapture has calm; calm has happiness; happiness has concentration; concentration has knowledge and vision of things as they are;...disenchantment and dispassion;...release by knowledge and vision as their aim and advantage. So you see, Ānanda, good moral conduct leads gradually up to the summit [AN V. 2].²²

In the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, the Buddha also repeatedly declares:

Such is *sīla*, such is *samādhi*, such is *paññā*. *Samādhi*, when based upon *sīla*, is rich in result and of great effect. *Paññā*, when based upon *samādhi*, is rich in result and of great effect. The mind, when developed through *paññā*, is thoroughly liberated from the *āsavas*, taints, namely, *kāmāsava*, *bhavāsava*, and *avijjāsava* [DN 16].²³

The relationship between moral virtues and enlightenment, and moral virtues and nirvāṇa, is the relationship between ethics and soteriology. To quote from Keown once more: "Far from being incompatible there is an integral and inalienable relationship between moral goodness and enlightenment. Since the path is both the means and the end, there is no ontological gulf to be 'crossed over'.²⁴ The sharp disagreement between Tsong khapa and Go rampa on the matter of the two truths thus also applies to their treatment of morality and its soteriological significance.

The comparative analysis undertaken here clearly shows that the positions taken by the two Tibetan Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas are quite distinct and, in fact, irreconcilable. Tsong khapa's commitment to the unity between the two truths, and the unity between the two corresponding epistemic pathways, lays the foundation of the distinctive features of his entire philosophical system. In contrast, the distinctive features of Go rampa's account rest on his deep commitment to the mutually contradictory relationship between the two truths and the respective verifying cognitions. There is little doubt indeed that these two Tibetan Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas represent almost entirely distinct adaptations and interpretations of the conceptions of the two truths in the Indian Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka. Consequently, there can be little doubt either that the two Tibetan Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka traditions represented by Tsong khapa and Go rampa stand in direct opposition to one another—at least in terms of the four major philosophical areas of ontology, epistemology, soteriology and, not least, morality.

Notes on Introduction

¹ There is no definite division between the uses of Mādhyamika and Madhyamaka. Both can be used interchangeably and both are defensible. However, throughout the thesis, when the word is used in association with the person who holds the view I use Mādhyamika while when the term is used in association with the view itself, literature, system or tradition reflecting the view, I tend to use Madhyamaka.

² For a review of the numbering systems used by many Pāli Scholars, see 'The Contents and Structure of the Pali Canon and its Commentaries,' by the UK Association for Buddhist Studies at the University of Sunderland on:

<http://www.sunderland.ac.uk/~os0dwe/bs12.html>.

³ For a review of the numbering conventions used on 'Access to Insight's' translations, see 'Sutta Reference Numbers' on <http://www.accesstosight.org/abbrev.html#suttaref>

Notes and Tibetan citations on Chapter I

¹ See Newland, *The Two Truths*, pp. 59–75; and Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, pp. 413–417.

² *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, (p. 871) states: "'thing', in its most general sense, is interchangeable with 'entity' or 'being' and is applicable to any item whose existence is acknowledged by a system of ontology, whether that item be particular, universal, abstract, or concrete".

³ *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, p. 633: ngo bo/ rang bzhin dang gnas lugs/

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 633: ngo bo gcig pa/ rang bzhin tha mi dad pa/ dper na bum pa dang mi rtag pa lta bu'o/

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 633: ming gi nam grangs la rang bzhin gcig pa dang/ bdag nyid gcig pa'o//

⁶ Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*, p. 364 also translates *ngo bo cig* as a 'single-nature'.

⁷ See Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, p. 413 and Newland, *The Two Truths*, pp. 59.

⁸ Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*, (p. 364) writes, "the two truths are of the same nature but have different opposites".

⁹ Dreyfus, *Recognising Reality*, pp. 165–170.

¹⁰ As suggested by Prof. Garfield on my draft chapter.

¹¹ *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, p. 1458: rtog pa rigs mi mthun pa'am tha dad pa las log par snang ba'i chos/ dper na/ bum pa ma yin pa las log tsam gyi cha ni bum pa'i ldog pa yin pa ste rtog pa la snang ba'i gzugs lta bu'o//

¹² *Recognising Reality*, p. 166.

¹³ *Recognising Reality*, p. 165.

¹⁴ *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, p. 663: ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad pa/ rang bzhin so so ba ma yin zhing rang gi ldog pa tha dad du gnas pa ste/ bum pa dang shes bya gnyis dang/ mi rtag pa dang dngos po/ mi dang mi'i nyer len gyi bum po'o//

¹⁵ *Grub mtha'i nam bshad*, pp. 849–852.

¹⁶ *Meditation on Emptiness*, pp. 406–412. Hopkins also considers 'Jam dbyangs bZhad pa's objections to those six different positions regarding the basis of the divisions of the two truths.

¹⁷ *The Two Truths*, pp. 40–50.

¹⁸ *dGongs pa rab bsal*, p. 176: bden pa gnyis kyi dbye gzhi la 'dud tshul me 'dra ba mang mod kyang/ 'dir shes bya la bya ste// His followers unanimously accept 'objects of knowledge' as the basis of the division of the two truths. For example, mKhas grub rJe (see Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*, pp. 357–360), wherein he not only proposes 'objects of knowledge' as the basis of the division of the two truths but also refutes the position of rNgog who discounts ultimate

truth from the objects of knowledge. See also lCang skya, *Grub mtha' mdzes rgyan*, pp. 317-318; and 'Jam dbyangs bZhad pa, *Grub mtha' rnam bshad*, pp. 849-852.

¹⁹ Toh. no. 60, *dKon brtsegs nga*, folio 62b: 'de ltar de bzhin gshigs pas kun rdzob dang don dam pa gnyis thugs su chud de/ shes bar bya ba yang kun rdzob dang don dam pa'i bden pa 'der zad de/ de yang bcom ldan ldas kyis stong pa nyid du rab tu gzig rab tu mkhyen/ legs par mngon du byas pas de'i phyir thams cad mkhyen pa zhes bya'o// Cited in the *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 176; mKhas grub rje (see Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*, p. 357).

²⁰ Toh no.60, *dKon brtsegs nga*, folio 61b. Cited in the *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 178: 'jig rten mkhen pa'i gzhan la ma gsan par/ bden pa de gnyis nyid kyis stong par mrzad/ gang gi kun rdzob de bzhin don dam tse/ bden pa gsum pa gang yang ma mchis so//

²¹ *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, p. 2862: shes bya/ blo'i yul du bya rung ba ste/ ka ba dang bum pa la sogs pa'i chos gang dang gang yin rung kyang/ sems can nas sangs rgyas kyi bar gyi blo spi'i yul du bya rung ba'o//

²² *Meditation on Emptiness*, p. 418.

²³ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 173: 'dis ni myu gu lta bu gcig gi ngo bo la yang phye na kun rdzob yin pa dang/ don dam yin pa'i ngo bo gnyis yod par ston gyi ...// As Tsong khapa further explains, "the ultimate reality of the sprout is its [ultimate] characteristic (*rang bzhin*), thus it is called sprout's nature. The sprout's colour, shape etc., are also its features, therefore they too are its nature" (*rTsa shes tik chen*, p. 406: myu gu'i chos nyid ni de'i rang bzhin yin pas de'i ngo bo zhes bya la myu gu'i kha dog dang dbyibs la sogs pa yang myu gu'i bdag nyid yin pas de'i ngo bo'o//)

²⁴ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 173: 'des ni myu gu lta bu gcig gi ngo bo la yang phye na kun rdzob yin pa dang/ don dam yin pa'i ngo bo gnis yod par ston gyi myu gu'i ngo bo gcig nyid so skye dang 'phags pa la ltos nas bden pa gnyis su bstan pa gtan min no//

²⁵ Hopkins also states, "the division of the two truths is not an ontological division... The division of the two truths emphasises two types of objects of consciousness, truths and falsities. Both, however, are falsely existent or falsely established because neither is independent; each depends on its imputing consciousness and on the other". See *Meditation on Emptiness*, p. 414

²⁶ *The Two Truths*, p. 49.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 374a-b

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 374a-b

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 374a-b: yul gyi gnas tshul gyi ngos nas bden pa gyis su med kyang blos gnas tshul mthong ba dang ma mthong ba'i sgo nas bden pa gnyis su dbye zhes pa'i don du snang bas shin tu legs so// des na gnas tshul rang ngos nas mtshan mtshon dang/ dbye gzhi dang dbye ba sogs byar med kyang tha snyad bden par sgro brtag nas gdul bya la bstan pa'i dbye ba'i ya gyal yod pa ltar bbye gzhi'ang yod par bya dgos//

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 374b: gsung rub kyi brjod bya tsam dbyer gzhi byas na shin tu'ang 'thad te... dbu ma'i zhung lugs 'dir sgras bstan du med kyang tha snyad du sgras bstan pa dang/ bden pa gnyis po dbyir med kyang gdul bya la dbye ste bstan pa sogs gzhi'ang 'grel gye dgongs pa gong 'og sgrigs na 'de nyid 'thad par sems so//

³² *Ibid.*, p. 374a-b: gnas tshul rang ngos nas mtshan mtshon dang/ dbye gzhi dang dbye ba sogs byar med kyang tha snyad bden par sgro btags nas gdul bya la bstan pa'i tshe bye ba'i ya gyal yod pa ltar dbye bzhi yod par bya dgos...//

³³ *Nagarjuniana*, p. 19.

³⁴ *Nagarjuniana*, p. 19-49n.

³⁵ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 374a–b.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 374b: bden pa gnyis ste/ yul can gyi blo sgo nas kun rdzob gyi bden pa dang don dam bden pa gnyis yin la//

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 375b: dbu ma'i gzhun lugs 'dir ni yul rang ngos nas bden pa gnyis su dbyer med...//

³⁸ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 611: de yang gzhi gcig nyid snang tshul gyi sgo nas so sor phye ba yin gyi yul gyi ngos nas so sor yod pa zhig ma yin no// Also see f. 603: de ltar blo'i sgo nas ngo bo gnyis 'dzin pa'i mthong ba yang dag pa'i yul ni don dam bden pa yin la/ thong ba rdzun pa'i yul ni kun rdzob bden pa'i//

³⁹ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 375b: brdzun pa mthong ba dang/ yang dag mthong ba gnyis sam/ 'khrul ma khrul gnyis/ rmongs ma rmongs gnyis/ phyin ci log ma log gnyis sam/ tshad ma yin min gnyis kyis mthong tshul gyi sgo nas kun rdzob den pa dang/ don dam bden pa gyis su phye ba ste// Also see p. 375b–d for his detailed authentication of each of these assertions through citing various textual sources.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 384c: bden pa gnyis yul can gyi blo rmongs ma rmongs sam brdzun pa mthong ba dang/ yang dag mthong ba'am/ 'khrul ma 'khrul gyi sgo nas 'jog dgos pas yul can gyi blo'i sgo nas 'jog pa ni rgya gar gyi thal rang thams cad mthun par snang la//

⁴¹ He argues that the division of the two truths is made depending on 'mistaken cognition' (blo 'khrul ba) and 'unmistaken cognition' (blo makhrol ba). See *Grub mtha' mrdzod*, ff. 201–202.

⁴² *gZhung lugs legs bshad pa*, p. 72d: yul can gyi blo 'khrul pa dang/ ma khrul pa gnyis la ltos nas bden pa gnyis su nges pa yin no//

⁴³ Mi pham's treatment of the two truths is quite inconsistent. Sometimes he appears strikingly similar to the view held by Tsong khapa, particularly in the *Nges shes sgros me*, ff. 95–97 and his commentary to the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, i.e., *Zla ba'i zhal lung* ff. 81, 169. In the *Shes 'grel ke ta ka*, pp. 3–4, 90–92, Mi pham however explicitly endorses the perspective based division of the two truths.

⁴⁴ *Rigs tsogs dka' gnad*, f. 7: bden pa gnyis po yang yul la chos gnyis yod pa'i dbang gyis bzhang pa min gyi/ shes ngo gnyis la ltos nas gzhag pa ste// See also f. 11.

⁴⁵ Although, he claims 'mere objects of knowledge' (*shes bya tsam*) as the basis of the division of the two truths, it is obvious that he is more committed to a division based on two different perspectives. See *Grub mtha' kun shes*, f. 27; and *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, f. 206, where he argues that the Prāsaṅgikas accept all conventionalities based on the perspectives of ordinary beings.

⁴⁶ Despite the fact that he claims 'mere truth' (*bden pa tsam*) as the basis of the division, his explanation is rooted in the notion that the two truths are distinguished on the basis of the correct perception and the incorrect perception. See *bDen gnyis rnam gzhag*, f. 15; also see (ff. 3–4) for his objections to Tsong khapa's claim that the objects of knowledge (*shes bya*) is the basis of the divisions of the two truths.

⁴⁷ *Dag brgyud grub pa'i shing rta*, ff. 5, 306: 'jig rten pa gang dag de kno na nyid rtogs ched du 'jig rten gyi bden brdzun gyi tha snyad sogs dang sgo bstun nas de ngor gcom ldan 'das kyis bden gnyis kyis mam gzhag mdzad kyis/ bdu ma pa rang lugs kyis grub pa ni ma yin no// He argues that there is no two truths in the Madhyamaka system. They are purely posited from the perspective of ordinary beings.

⁴⁸ In his introduction to the *Mādhyamika Dialectic and the philosophy of Nāgārjuna*, he argues (pp. xxiv–xxvi), "paramārthasatya, or Absolute Truth is the knowledge of the real as it is without any distortion... Samvṛtisatya is Truth so-called; Truth as conventionally believed in common parlance... There are not two different spheres or sets of objects... the difference is in our manner of looking at things".

⁴⁹ In his article 'Madhyamaka' in the *Mādhyamika Dialectic and the Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*, he

argues (pp. 152–153) “*dharma*s are like the hairs that a monk with diseased eyes thinks he sees in his alms bowl; ...This is proved by the fact that a man with the undiseased eyes has no thought about these hairs at all...”.

⁵⁰ In *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa* he writes (p. 300): “The Absolute and the Empirical... are not two sets of separate realities set over against each other...The Absolute or Nirvāṇa viewed through the thought-constructions (*vikalpa*) is saṃsāra, the world or saṃsāra viewed sub *specie aeternitatis* is the Absolute or Nirvāṇa itself”. Also he states (p. 71): “the universe viewed as a whole is the Absolute, viewed as a process, it is the phenomena”.

⁵¹ In *Nagarjuniana*, he writes (p. 276): “The two truths cannot be claimed to express different levels of objective reality since all things always equally lack *svabhāva*. They are merely two ways of looking (*darśana*) at things, a provisional and a definite”.

⁵² In *The Emptiness of Emptiness*, he argues (p. 232) that all phenomena possess only one nature and that the second nature is obtained on the strength of false perceptions of common people. It is thus said “that all things bear a dual intrinsic nature”. Also see pp. 39, 40, 231.

⁵³ *The Two Truths*, p. 47.

⁵⁴ As cited in Newland's *The Two Truths*, p. 47.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Meditation on Emptiness*, p. 419.

⁵⁸ *Madhyamkāvatāra*, p. 155: *ḍngos kun yang dag brdzun pa mthong ba yis/ ḍngos rnyed ngo bo gyis ni 'dzin par 'gyur/VI:23/* Cited in the *Madhyamakātārabhāṣya*, p. 98.

⁵⁹ *Madhyamakātārabhāṣya*, p. 98: ‘du byed dang myu gu la sogs pa nang dang phyi ro gyi *ḍngos po thams cad kyi rang gyi ngo bo rnam pa gnyis nye bar bstan ste//* Cited in the *rTs shes ṭik-chen*, p. 406.

⁶⁰ *Stong thun chen mo*, f. 429: ‘jug pa las/ *ḍngos rnyed ngo bo gnyis ni 'dzin par 'gyur/ zhes sogs rtsa 'grel ggis gsung pa ltar kun rdzob dang don dam gyi chos thams cad la ngo bo yod la/ ngo bo yod na ngo bo gcig dang tha dad gang rung yin ḍgos ste yod na gcig dang tha dad gang rung yin ḍgos pa'i phyir ro//* I borrowed the translation of this passage from Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*, p. 363.

⁶¹ Tsong khapa argues that there are only two possibilities, either the two natures are identical (*ngo bo gcig*) or distinct (*ngo bo tha dad*). See *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 176: ‘der ni gnyis ka la ngo bo yod la/ de la ngo bo gcig dang tha dad gang yang min pa mi srid pa'i phir/

⁶² *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 176: byas pa dang mi rtag pa lta bu ste//

⁶³ See Namdol, *Ācārya Nāgārjuna's Bodhicittavivaraṇa and Ācārya kamalaśīla's Bodhicittabhāvanā*, pp. 45–45:kun rdzob las ni tha dad par// de nyid dmigs pa ma yin te/67/ kun rdzob stong pa nyid du bshad// stong pa kho na kun rdzob yin//med na mi 'byung nges pa'i phir//byas dang mi rtag je bzhin no/ 68/ Cited in the *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p.176; mKhas grub rJe, *Stong thun chen mo* (see Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*, p. 364) and Newland, *The Two Truths*, p. 61.

⁶⁴ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, pp. 176–177: rkang pa dang po bzhi'i don ni kun rdzob las ngo bo that dad par de kho na nyid yod pa min te/ kun rdzob pa mams bden pas stong pa yin pa'i phir dang/ bden stong nyid kyang gzhi kun rdzob la 'jog pa'i phir zhes pa 'o// de nas gnyis kyis ni de ltar yin dang med na mi 'byung ba'i 'brel ba nges la/ de yang bdag gcig pa'i 'brel pa yin pas byas mi rtag bzhin du ngo bo gcig par bstan no//

⁶⁵ *Stong thun chen mo*, f. 429:de'i phyir bden gnyis ni ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad cing med na mi 'byung ba bdag gcig 'brel grub pa byas mi rtag lta bu yin te...// See *A Dose of Emptiness*, (p. 364) for a slightly different way of translating this passage.

⁶⁶ *The Two Truths*, p. 60.

⁶⁷ *A Dose of Emptiness*, p. 516-1128n.

⁶⁸ *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, p. 276.

⁶⁹ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 375d: spyir gnyis su dbye ba thams cad la bum snam ltar rdzas tha dad dam/ byas mi rtag ltar ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad dam/ zla ba dang bsil zer byed pa ltar rnam grangs pa'i tha dad dam/ dngos po dang ngos med ltar gcig pa bkag pa'i tha dad yin zhes bya ba 'de dpyad dgos pas bden pa gnyis la'ang de dpyad par bya'o// See also Sa pañ, *Thub pa dgongs gsal*, p. 31d.

⁷⁰ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 376d: mdo las gcig dang tha dad la skyon brjod pa ni don dam gyi dbang du byas pa yin pas don dam par gcig dang gnyis las grol la//; also p. 376a: 'o na ci ltar gnas zhe na gcig dang tha dad las grol bar gnas te/

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 377a: don dam par gcig dang tha dad las grol ba dang/ 'phags pa'i mnyam gzahag gi ngor gcig dang tha dad las grol ba don gcig pa'i phir...//

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 377a: tha snyad du dngos po dang dngos med ltar gcig pa bkag pa'i tha dad yin ces gsungs pa 'de nyid rigs pas 'thad par mngon te//

⁷³ See *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 376d; and *lTa ba ngan sel*, ff. 604-605 for more on such criticisms.

⁷⁴ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 376d: bden pa gnyis ngo bo gcig yin na dpe'i sgo nas rab rib can gyis mthong ba'i skra shad dang/ mthong ba dag pas skra shad med par mthong ba gnyis ngo bo gcig tu thal te/ bden pa gnyis ngo bo gcig yin pa'i phir//

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 375d: mdo sde dgongs 'grel las/ bden gnyis gcig pa dang tha dad pa'i phyogs la skyon bzhi bzhi gsungs te//

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 375d-376a: dang po ni bden pa gnyis gcig yin na/1/ byis pas kun rdzob gzugs dang sgra la sogs pa mngon sum du mthong ba de bzhin du don dam pa'i bden ba'ang mngon sum mthong bar thal ba dang/2/ kun rdzob las gzugs sgra la sogs pa spros ba'i dbye ba du ma yod pa de bzhin don dam pa la yang dbye ba du ma yod par thal ba dang/3/ kun rdzob kun nas nyon mongs pa'i rang bzhin nam mtshan nyid yin ba ltar don dam yang de ltar 'gyur ba dang/4/ kun rdzob byis pas mthong ba la sogs pa'i don logs su btsan du med pa de bzhin du don dam pa'i bden pa'ang de ltar thal ba'o//

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 376a: gnyis pa ni bden pa gnyis tha dad yin na.../1/ 'phags pa rnams kyis don dam mngon sum du rtogs kyang kun rdzob kyis 'ching ba las mi grol bar thal ba dang/2/ chos nyid don dam de kun rdzob kyis spyi'i mtshan nyid ma yin par thal ba dang/3/ 'du byed kun rdzob rab tu ma grub pa'am/ bdag med de don dam a ma yin par thal ba dang/4/ gang zag gcig gi rgyud la kun nas nyon mongs kyis mtshan yid dang/ rnam byang gi mtshan nyid gnyis dus gcig tu so sor grub par thal ba'o//

⁷⁸ *Zab don gdams pa'i mig 'byed*, p. 323m: ldog pa gcig yin na yang [1] bum pa'i chos nyid mngon sum du rtogs pa'i so skye yod pa dang/2/chos nyid de la dmigs nas chags sogs nyon mongs skye ba dang/3/de la kha dog dang dbyibs sogs grub par 'gyur zhing/4/rnal 'byor pas chos nyid sgom pa'i 'bad pa don med du thal/ bum pa dang bum pa'i chos nyid ldog pa gcig yin pa'i phir//

⁷⁹ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 177.

⁸⁰ *sTong thun chen mo*, f. 429: ngo bo tha dad yin na 'brel med don gzhan du 'gyur dgos te/ ngo bo tha dad la bdag gcig 'brel mi srid pa'i phyir dang/ chos nyid 'dus ma byas yin pas de dang de 'byung du 'brel ba mi srid pa'i phyir ro// I borrowed the translation of this passage from Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*, p. 363.

⁸¹ Thub stan Chos grags, *sPyod 'jug 'grel bzhad*, pp. 701–702. Also see Newland, *The Two Truths*, pp. 63–66 for his comments on the works of 'Jam dbyangs bZhad pa and Nga dbang dPal ldan on the same issue.

⁸² *Zab don gdams pa'i mig 'byed*, pp. 322–323: /1/ bum pa bden ston bum pa'i gnas lug min pa dang/2/bum pa bden stong rtogs pas bum ba bden 'dzin gyi sgro 'dogs mi gcod ba dang/3/bum pa bum pa bden grub kyi dgag gzhi yin pa sogs mi 'thad cing/4/ sangs 'phags kyi rgyud la bum pa bden stong rtogs pa'i yeshes dang bum pa bden 'dzin gnyis lhan cig tu med pa sogs mi thad par thal/ bum pa dang bum pa bden stong ngo bo tha dad yin pa'i phir//

⁸³ *Grub mtha' mdzod*, ff. 192–193: des na don dam pa'i bden pa spros pa thams cad dang dral ba de kun rdzob kyi bden pa las dngos po gzhan dang de nyid du'ang brjod du med pa/ gcig pa bkag tsam gyi tha dad yin no// See ff. 191–192 for his criticisms on other views.

⁸⁴ *Rigs tsogs dka' gnad*, f. 21–22: tha snyad du gcig pa bkag pa'i tha dad de/ skra shad dang skra shad kyi dben pa' tha dad bzhin no// As he simplistically states it, “it is like the difference between the [perception of] arrows of hairs and [the perception of] without hair”.

⁸⁵ *Zla ba'i zhal lung*, f. 84: rnam grangs min pa kho na don dam dang/ tha snyad shes brjod 'jug gsum gyi yul gyur thams cad kun rdzob byas na bden gnyis gcig pa bkag ba'i tha dad yin nam snyam// In this passage Mi pham agrees with kLong chen, his predecessor, for he argues that “from the standpoint of provisional ultimate (*rnam grangs kyi don dam*) or from the conventional standpoint, the two truths are distinct and incompatible (*gcig pa bkag pa'i tha dad*)”. However, Mi pham does not maintain this position consistently. Elsewhere he argues that two truths have a single ontological identity but different conceptual identities (*ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad*) from the standpoint of the non-provisional ultimate (*rnam grangs min pa'i don dam*). See *Zla ba'i zhal lung*, f. 81: bden pa gnyis ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad pa'i ngo bo gcig pa de/ snang stong dbyer med ngo bo gcig yin la/ de ni bden gnyis dpyod pa'i tshad mas grub ste gang snang 'de stong/ stong pa de snang ba las tha dad du yod na/ chos de'i ngo bo mi stong bar 'gyur bas de gnyis tha dad du med do// ngo bo dbyer med par grub pa'i ngo bo ni rnam grangs min pa'i don dam ste/ de la gang du'ang brjod mi shes te so sor rang rig gi yul lo// Also see *Shes 'grel ke ta ka*, p. 4, for his criticism against the notion that the two truths are distinct or identical. Note, however the sentences structure. He argues that “if two truths are ultimately distinct (*don dam par tha dad*) and conventionally identical (*kun rdzob tu gcig*)”, then there would be four fallacies each. Although Mi pham's dialectics seem very compatible with Tsong khapa's, the underlying assumptions are totally different. From Mi pham's definitions of the two truths, it is clear that two truths must not have equal status. If this is a little too unconvincing, see *Zla ba'i zhal lung*, f. 159: mthar ni 'phi don med de bag chags kyi snang ba tsam yin par dngos stobs kyi grub ste/

⁸⁶ The criticisms dGe 'dun Chos 'phel advance against Tsong khapa's view are considered here primarily as means to indicate dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's rejection of the view that holds the mutual compatibility between the two truths. These criticisms are quite legitimate from the point of view held by Go rampa and dGe 'dun Chos 'phel. According them, the two truths are reducible to ignorance and wisdom. Whereas for Tsong khapa, the two truths must not be reducible to ignorance and wisdom since both have their ontological references. Therefore, the legitimacy of these criticisms should be understood properly by having proper perspectives of both these two different systems before applying them directly against Tsong khapa's view straightaway.

⁸⁷ *kLu grub dgongs rgyan*, p. 215: bden gnyis zung 'jug bya ba 'de 'phags pa'i yeshes dang 'jig rten phal pa'i rnam rtog gnyis 'gal med zung du 'jug pa'i dus gcig srid na de dus 'ong bar nges kyi gzhan du nam yang srid pa'i skabs med do// Also p. 217: kun rdzob dang don dam

mi 'gal bya ba 'de bden gnyis gang gi dpyod lungs byed na yang thar pa'i go skabs ga la yod//

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 220-222: don la blun po'i mthar thug pa'i 'jig rten phal ba'i bsam mno dang/ mkhas pa'i mthar thug pa'i sangs rgyas kyi mkhyen lugs gnyis 'gal med zung 'jug te khas blang pa yin la/ de 'dra byed tshe ma rigs pa dang rigs shes gnyis kyi yul yang 'gal med zung 'jug tu mkhas blang na ci la mi chog/...mdor na bden gnyis 'gal med du 'dod pa 'de sangs rgyas nas sems can gyi bar bsam mno thams cad 'gal med du 'dod pa'i lugs yin no//

⁸⁹ *Thub pa dgongs gsal*, p. 32a: don dam dang tha snyad pa'i rnam bzhas gnyis las/ dang po ni gcig dang tha dad kyi spros pa dang bral ba yin te...gnyis pa tha snyad pa'i rnam gzhas ni/ gzhan sel gyi ngor ngo bo byed med ldog pa tha dad ces bya ba'am de nyid dang gzhan du brjod du med pa zhes bya ba gsungs pa de kho na khas blang ngo// Sa paṇ expressly rejects the notion of 'distinct that is incompatible with their unity' (*gcig pa bkag pa'i tha dad*). See *gShung lugs legs bshad*, p. 73a: gcig pa bkag pa'i tha dad kyang ma yin te/ gang rung dgnos por thal ba'i phir/ des na de nyid dang gzhan du brjod ba med de// Go rampa, on other hand, candidly ascribes this view to Sa paṇ. See *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 376d: gsum pa ni dpal ldan Sa skya Puṇḍita'i bshad pa...

⁹⁰ *bDu 'jug rnam bshad*, pp. 121-121: bden pa gnyis po 'de dag gcig gam tha dad ce na/ gcig pa'am ma yin/ tha dad pa'am ma yin te/ 'de dag phan tshun ltos nas rnam par 'jog pa'i phir ro/ gang zhig gang la ltos pa de ni de dang gcig ma yin te/ rang nyid rang la ltos pa la dgos pa med pa'i phir ro/ /gzhan nyid kyang ma yin te/ ltos pa po ma grub na ltos sa las gzhan nyid kyang ma yin la/ /grub na gzhan las ltos me dgos pa'i phir ro// The two truths can neither be expressed as identical nor different, they are relative as opposed to ontologically interdependent. If the relationship between the two truths is not understood in terms of subjective relativity, Red mda' ba would contradict the definitions of the two truths he provided earlier based on two conflicting perspectives.

⁹¹ He maintains that the two truths are 'inexpressible' (*brjod par bya ba ma yin pa*) in terms of how they relate each other. They can neither be expressed as identical nor distinct in terms of their nature. This inexpressibility, he says, applies both in terms of the conventional stance and in terms of the ultimate stance. See *bDen gnyis rnam gzhas*, f. 33: myu gu dang de'i chos nyid stong pa nyid ni ngo bo gcig dang tha dad gang du yang brjod par bya ba ma yin te/ kun rdzob tu yang der brjod par bya ba ma yin don dam du yang der brjod par bya ba ma yin pa'i phir// See his objections to the notion of identity or difference based on *the Saṃdhinirmocana sūtra* (ff. 33-35); and his objections to Tsong khapa's position that the two truths have a single ontological identity with different conceptual identities (ff. 30-32). His criticisms for Tsong khapa, though, rest on many factors. One notable factor is his absolute denial of the very coherence of the so-called 'ontological identity' or 'single-nature' relationship in the Madhyamaka system. For instance he writes (ff. 31-32): chos thams cad ngo bo nyid med pa zhes bya ba 'de dbu ma'i lugs yin pa'i phir/ de yang dbu ma par rang lugs 'chad pa na kun rdzob kyi rang gi ngo bo ni rnam pa thams cad du 'gog pa kho nar nges la/ don dam pa'i ngo bo ni gnas skabs gcig tu khas blangs kyang/ de ngo bo mtshan nyid pa ma yin la/ de yang mthar 'gog pa'i phir/ byang chub sems 'grel las/ med na mi 'byung nges pa'i phir/ /zhes 'byung ba de yang/ kun rdzob kyi ngo bo med pa'i shes byed yin te/ gzhang der kun rdzob kyi ngo bo med pa nyid don dam par bshad pa'i phir//

⁹² *D'ag brgyud grub pa'i shing rta*, ff. 287-288: kho bo cag dbu ma pa la ni rnam par dpyad pa na bden gnyis gzhi grub pa dang ma grub pa gang du'ang smra bsam brjod pa dang dral pa'i phir/ bden gnyis ngo bo gcig dang tha dad gang du'ang rtog par ga la byed ces shes par bya'o// Also see his objections to Dol po pa's notion of distinct nature of the two truths, (ff. 281-285); and the objections to Tsong khapa's notion of identical ontological characters of the two truths, (ff. 285-287).

⁹³ sTag tsang holds that two truths are 'like characteristic and characterised, and that they are characteristically inseparable'. See *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, f. 268: kun rdzob rang stong dang don dam bzhan stong du 'dod pa ltar ngo bo tha dad ma yin gyi/ cho can dang de'i chos nyid dam gnas lugs yin pas bden gnyis ngo bo dbyer med du gnas shing// However, given his commitment to the subjective distinctions, it is puzzling as to how he could consistently sustain the argument that the two truths resemble characteristic and characterised.

⁹⁴ *rTsa shes tik chen*, p. 406: myu gu'i chos nyid ni de'i rang gzhi yin pas de'i ngo bo zhes bya la myu gu'i kha dog dang dbyibs la sogs pa yang myu gu' bdag nyid yin pas de'i ngo bo'o//

⁹⁵ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, p. 64: tha snyad la ni ma brtan par/ /dam pa'i don ni bstan mi nus/ /dam pa'i don ni ma rtogs par/ /mya ngan 'das pa thob m 'gyur/xxiv:10/

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 64: gang la stong pa nyid rung ba/ /de la thams cad rung bar 'gyur/ /gang la stong nyid mi rung ba/ /de la thams cad rung mi 'gyur/xxiv:14/

⁹⁷ *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, p.135: gang la stong pa nyid srid pa/ /de la don rnams thams cad srid/ /gang la stong nyid mi srid pa/ /de la ci yang mi srid do/ 70/

⁹⁸ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, p. 65:rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba gang/ /de ni stong pa nyid du bshad/ /de ni brten nas gdags pa ste/ /de nyid dbu ma'i lam yin no/xxiv:18/

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 135: gang zhig stong dang rten 'byung dag/ /dbu ma'i lam du don gcig par/ /gsungs mchog mtshungs pa med pa yi/ /sangs rgyas de la phyag 'tshal lo/71/

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65: gang phyir rten 'byung ma yin pa'i/ /chos 'ga' yod pa ma yin pa/ /de phyir stong pa ma yin pa'i/ /chos 'ga' yod pa ma yin no/xxiv:19/Similarly other notable verses in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* such as XXIV:10-11, XXIV:20, XXIV:36-37, XXIV:39-40 etc., also reinforce Nāgārjuna's commitment to the mutually compatible relationship between the two truths.

¹⁰¹ *Madhyamakāvatāra*, p. 158: dngos po stong pa gzugs brnyan la sogs pa/ /tshogs la ltos nas ma grags pa yang min/ /ji ltar der ni gzugs brnyan sogs stong las/ /shes pa de yi rnam pa skye 'gyur ltar/vi:37/

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 158: de bzhin dngos po thams cad stong na yang/ stong nyid dag las rab tu skye bar 'gyur/ /

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 158: bden pa gnyis su'ang rang bzhin med pa'i phyir/ /de dag rtag pa ma yin chad pa'ang min/vi:38/

¹⁰⁴ *rTen 'brel stod pa*, p.11:kyod ni nam gzhig stong pa nyid/ /rten 'byung don do mthong pa na/ /rang bzhin gyis ni stong pa dang/ /bya byed 'thad pa'ang mi 'gal zhing/11/ de las bldog par mthong ba na/ stong la bya ba mi rung zhing/ /bya dang bcas la stong med pas/ mya ngan gyang du ltung bar bzhed/12/

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 15:de phyir rten nas 'byung ba las/ /ma gtogs chos 'ga' yod min pas/ /rang bzhin gyis ni stong pa las/ /ma gtogs chos 'ga' med par gsungs/ 14/

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 18:rang bzhin 'ga' yang med pa dang/ /'de la rten nas 'de 'byung pa/ /rnam gzhad thams cad 'thad pa gnyis/ /mi 'gal 'du ba smos ci dgos/18/

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 27:de phyir rten nas 'byung ba gang/ /rang bzhin gyis ni gdod ma nas/ /rnam par dben yang der snang bas/ /'de kun sgyu ma bzhin du gsungs/27/

¹⁰⁸ *Lam gtso rnam gsum*, p. 252: gzhan yang snang bas yod mtha' sel ba dang/ /stong pas med mtha' sel zhing stong pa nyid/ /rgyu dang 'bras bur 'char ba'i tshul shes na/ /mthar 'dzin lta bas 'phrog par me 'gyur ro/13/

¹⁰⁹ *Lam gtso rnam gsum*, p. 252: snang ba rten 'drel blu ba med pa dang/ /stong pa khas len dral ba'i go ba gnyis/ /ji srid so sor snang ba de srid du/ da dung thob pa'i dgongs pa rtogs pa med/11/

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 252: nam zhig ris 'jog med par cig car du/ /rten 'brel mi bslur mthong ba tsam nyid nas/ /nges shes yul gyi 'dzin stangs kun zhig na/ de tshe lta ba'i dpyad pa rtogs pa lags/12/

¹¹¹ The twofold bodies of a buddha—namely, the *rūpakāya* (*gzugs sku*), literally 'form body' is accomplished as a result of the exhaustive accumulation of meritorious deeds (*bsod nams kyi tshogs*, *pūnya sambhāra*) and the *dharmakāya* (*chos sku*), literally 'nature body', or 'truth body' is accomplished as a result of the exhaustive accumulation of penetrative wisdom (*yeshe kyi tshogs*, *jñāna sambhāra*).

¹¹² *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, p. 898: bden pa gnyis la nye ring mi rig te/ bden pa gnyis gang las nyams na phung par yang 'dra/ mthar ltong par 'dra/ ma nyams na tshogs gnyis rdzogs pa dang sku gnyis thob pa'i bar 'dra ba'i phyir te/ kun rdzob khas ma blangs par nyams na skur 'debs kyi mthar ltong dge rtsa gcod 'bras bu ngan 'gror ltong/ gsugs sku sgrub byed dang de'i 'bras bu las nyams par 'gyur...//

¹¹³ The twofold accumulations include the meritorious deeds (*bsod nams kyi tshogs*, *pūnya sambhāra*) and the accumulation of penetrative wisdom (*yeshe kyi tshogs*, *jñāna sambhāra*).

¹¹⁴ *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, p. 899: des na bden gnyis zung 'brel gces te/ de la mthar mi ltong ba dang mi phung ba dang tshogs gnyis dang de'i sku gnyis thob pa'i bar yin phyir te...//

¹¹⁵ *Yuktiśāstikā*, p. 96: dge ba 'de yis skye bu kun/ /bsod nams yeshes tshogs bsags te/ /bsod nams yeshes las byung ba'i/ /dam pa gnyis ni thob par shog/60/ Cited in the *Yuktiśāstikāvṛtti*, f. 59. Also see the *Master of Wisdom*, (p. 93) for Lindtner's slightly different way of translating this verse.

¹¹⁶ Cited in the *Visuddhi Magga* of Buddhagosa, p. 809.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ The noble truth of suffering, the noble truth of origin of suffering, and the noble truth of path leading to the cessation of suffering belong come under conventional truth while the noble truth of the cessation of suffering is categorised under ultimate truth.

¹¹⁹ *bDen gnyis rnam gzhas*, p. 140: yeshes chos sku dang longs spyod rtogs pa'i sku gnyis dngos rgyu tshogs pa'i tshar gcig la rags las kyi 'brel pa grub pa yin la/ dus cig car du mngon du byed pa yin no/ /...des na gzhi'i bden pa gnyis zung du 'jug pa dang/ /lam tshogs gnyis zung du 'jug pa dang/ 'bras bu cho gzugs gnyis zung du 'jug pa rigs pa'i lam nas drangs...

¹²⁰ See the *Mūlamadhyamakārikā* of Nāgārjuna, p. 69 for his introductory notes.

¹²¹ In contrast Garfield, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, p. 297-108n argues, "despite their ontic unity, the ultimate truth is epistemologically and soteriologically more significant than the conventional".

¹²² *Prasannapadā*, p. 416: sangs rgyas bcom ldan las nams kyis chos bstan pa ni/ bden pa gnyis po 'de la brten nas 'jug pa yin no//

¹²³ *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, p. 69: bden pa bzhan gang cung zad cig yod pa de yang ci rigs par bden pa gnyis kyi khongs su gtogs pa kho nar nges par bya'o//

¹²⁴ *rTsa shes ṭik chen*, p. 411: don dam bden pa'i bden tshul ni/ mi slu ba yin la de yang gnas tshul gzhan du gnas shing snang tshul gzhan du snang nas 'jig rten la mi slu ba'i phir//

¹²⁵ *Yuktiśāstikāvṛtti*, f. 14: gal te de lta na'ang je ltar myang ngan las 'das pa don dam pa'i bden par gsungs she na/ de'i bdag nyid du 'jig rten la mi slu ba'i phir 'jig rten gyi tha snyad kho nas de don dam pa'i bden par gsungs so// Cited in the *rTsa shes ṭik-chen*, p. 411.

¹²⁶ *The Fundamental Wisdom of The Middle Way*, p. 208.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Mūlamadhyamakārikā*, p. 31: bcom ldan 'das kyi chos gang zhig/ slu ba de ni brdzun zhes gsungs/ /'du byed thams cad slu ba'i chos/ /de na de dag 'rdzun pa yin/xiii:1/ I borrowed the translation from Garfield, *The Fundamental Wisdom of The Middle Way*, p. 206.

¹²⁹ *The Fundamental Wisdom of The Middle Way*, p. 208.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Cūla-Viyūha Sutta*, Sn IV.12 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).

¹³² *rTsa shes tik chen*, p. 412: 'o na rigs pa dgrug cu pa las/ myang ngan 'das pa bden gcig bu/ rgyal ba rnams kyis nam gsungs pa/ de tshe lhag ma log min zhes/ mkhas pa su zhig rtog par byed/ ces myang 'das gcig bu bden gyi gzhan rnams mi bden zhes gsungs pa je ltar drangs snyam na//

¹³³ *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, ff.14-15: 'o na bcom ldan ldas kyis/ dge slong dag bden pa dam pa 'de ni gcig ste/ 'de lta ste mi slu ba'i chos can mya ngan las 'das pa'o/ /zhes gang gsungs pa de ji ltar zhe na/ /je ltar 'dus byas log par snang bas byis pa mams la slu bar byed pa yin pa de bzhin du/ /mya ngan las 'das pa ni ma yin te/ rtag tu skye ba med par'i rang bzhin gyis ngo bo kho nar gnas pa nyid kyi phir ro/ /de ni byis pa rnams la yang 'dus byas ltar skye ba'i ngo gor nam yang mi snang ngo/ /de'i phir mya ngan las 'das pa ni rtag tu kho nar mya ngan las 'das pa nyid du gnas pa'i phir jig rten gyi tha snyad kho nas bden pa dam par gsungs kyi...// Cited in the *rTsa shes tik chen*, p. 312; and mKhas grub rJe's *Stong thun chen mo* (see Cabezón. *A Dose of Emptiness*, p. 360).

¹³⁴ *The Fundamental Wisdom of The Middle Way*, pp. 296-297.

¹³⁵ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 377a: mthar thog bden pa gnyis su dbyer med pas grangs nges byar med de/ mdo las bden pa dam pa ni gcig kho na ste/ 'de lta ste/ mi slu ba'i chos can gyi myang ngan las 'das pa'o//

¹³⁶ *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, pp. 91-92: mya ngan 'das pa bden gcig bu/ rgyal ba rnams kyis nam gsungs pa/ de tshe lhag ma log min zhes/ mkhas pa su zhig rtog par byed/35/ I borrowed the translation of this verse straight from Chr. Lindtner, *Master of Wisdom*, p. 35.

¹³⁷ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 606: 'on na kun rdzob bden pa zhes pa'i tha snyad kyang mi 'thad par 'gyur te/ kun rdzob yin na bden pa yin pa 'gal ba'i phir/ de ni blo kun rdzob pa'i ngo bor bden ba la 'jog pas skyon med do/ yang dag kun rdzob ces pa yang/ blo kun rdzob pa la ltos nas yang dag tu 'jog pas skyon med do//

¹³⁸ *Yang dag lta ba'i od zher*, p. 287c: med bzhin du snang ba sgyu ma dang tshungs//

¹³⁹ *gZhug lugs legs bshad*, p. 72a: kun rdzob tu chos thams cad chu'i zlabas ltar med bzhin du snang par rtog pa yin la//

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72b: kun rdzob kyi bden pa'i mtshan nyid ni yod pa ma yin pa'i don snang ba'o//

¹⁴¹ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 377a: thabs dang thabs byung gi dbang du byas na tha snyad mthong pa'i blos dngos por gzung ba de nyid la gnas lugs dpyod pa'i blos ngos po ma mnyed pa nyid la don dam du 'jog dgos pa'i phir/

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 370b: 'o na gdul byas don dam pa rtogs pa'i thabs med par 'ghur ro snam na gdul byas de rtogs pa'i don du tshig gyi brtod bya dang/ sems kyi spyod yul du tha snyad kyi bden par sgro btags nas bstan pa ste//

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 370a-371a: He offers an explicit and a lengthy discussion on the superimposition of conventional truth and how it serves the purpose to reach the ultimate truth.

¹⁴⁴ When the truth is explained from the standpoint of the ordinary disciples ('*dul bya'i ngor*), Go rampa maintains the four precise enumerations of the truth. They are apprehending subjects (*yul can*), apprehended objects (*yul*), actions (*byed pa*) and potentials (*nus pa*). See *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 377a-b:gdul bya ngor bstan pa'i tshe/ yul can dang/ yul dang/ byed pa dang/ nus pa'i sgo nas grangs nges pa dang bzhi las dang po ni... yul can gyi blo la rmongs marmongs sogs gnyis su grangs nges pa'o/ gnyis pa ni gzhuks sogs kyi snang ba gcig nyid la'ang ma dpyad pa'i blo ngor de dang der bden pa dang/ dpyad na mi mnyed pa gnyis su nges pa'o/ gsum pa ni 'ching bar byed pa dang/ grol bar byed pa gnyis su nges pa'o/ bzhi pa ni bsod nams kyi tshogs bsag pa dang/ yeshes kyi tshogs bsag pa'i gzhir gyur pas skyu gnyis thob pa gnyis su zhugs pa'o//

¹⁴⁵ He stresses the notion that the enumeration of truth represents the two conflicting perspectives, and thus they are contradictory. "A mistaken cognition and an unmistaken cognition", as he argues, "are directly contradictory". For there is neither a thing that

'belongs to both categories that can be positively affirmed nor a thing that does not belong to either one of the two categories that can be repudiated. Hence the existence of the third alternative is not possible'. Therefore, twofold truth is a precise enumeration. See *Thub pa dgongs gsal*, p. 32a-b: bden pa bzhi dang bcu drug la sogs pa gsungs bzhin du gnyis su grangs nges pa'i rgyu mtshan ci yin zhe na/... 'dir ngos 'gal gyi mtha' rnam par dpyod pa las gnyis su nges te/ 'de ltar blo 'khrul ma 'khrul gnyis dngos 'gal yin la/ de'i sar na gnyis ka yin bsgrub phyogs dang/ gnyis ka ma yin pa dgag phyogs kyi phung po gsum pa mi srid pas bden ba gnyis su grangs nges so//; *gZhung lugs legs bshad*, p. 72d: yul can gyi blo 'khrul pa dang/ ma khrul pa gnyis la ltos nas' bden pa gnyis su nges pa yin no//

¹⁴⁶ Proposes enumeration based on direct contradiction between the transcendence and the non-transcendence of elaborations (*spros pa las grol ma grol*). See *Grub mtha' mdzod*, ff. 205–206: spros ba las grol ma grol dngos 'gal du nges pas bsgrub phyogs dang dgag phyogs kyi phung po gsum ba khegs pas gnyis su grangs nges so// rnam pa gcig tu na yul rnam ni yul can las ltos nas 'jog pa na yul can ni mthar mthog pa 'khrul pa'i blo dang/ mthar thog pa ma 'khrul pa'i blo gnyis las mi 'da'/ de la 'khor ba'i chos rnams ni 'khrul pa dang chos nyid ni ma 'khrul pa'i yul yin pas blo'i dbang gis gnyis su bzhas ste//

¹⁴⁷ *dBu tsa'i rnam bshad zab mo*, p. 287: yul can mthong ba brdzun pa dang/ mthong ba yang dag pa gnyis su nges pas/ gnyis su grangs nges par bzhas ste// Also see *Rigs tsogs dka' gnad*, f. 22: yul can gyi blo la gnas tshul la zhugs ma zhugs gnyis su nges pa'i dbang gis yul gnyis su nges par bzhas ste/ phung po gsum pa gzhan med pa'i phir blo la ltos nas bden pa gnyis su nges so//

¹⁴⁸ *dBu 'jug rnam bshad*, p.122: bden pa la ltos nas brdzun par rnam par 'jog la/ brdzun pa la ltos nas bden par rnam par 'jog pa'i phir ro//

¹⁴⁹ *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, f. 263: 'di'i dbye bar bya ba'i ngo bo'am ris ni gnyis kho na ste/ slu chos kun rdzob kyi bden pa dang/ bslu med don dam gyi bden pa'o...rig pa yang/ thabs phyogs gtso bor byas pa'i blang dor la kun rdzob ming du mi rung zhing/ blang dor gtso bo rnam dag gi dmigs pa la don dam med du mi rung bas nyung na mi 'du zhing de tsam gyis skyes bu'i don thams cad tshogs par 'gyur bas mang mi dgos pa'i phir ro//

¹⁵⁰ Śākya mChog ldan is a monist as far as his claim about the truth. He explicitly criticises the concept of the enumeration of truth while proving logical plausibility of a single truth. See *bDen gnyis rnam gzhas*, ff. 7–8: Here Śākya mChog ldan attacks mKhas grub rJe's 'precise enumeration of the two truths'. He does this by vigorously defending his view that ultimate truth is the only truth, therefore, truth itself cannot be divided. Yet he does enumerate the truth based on contradictions between the deceptive and the non-deceptive standpoints. For this see *dBu rtsa'i rnam bshad 'jug ngog*, f. 222: grangs nges pa yin te/ bslu mi slu phan tshun spangs te gnas pa'i 'gal ba yin pas so//

¹⁵¹ *kLu grub dgongs rgyan*, pp. 214–215, 222, 277.

¹⁵² *bDen gnyis rnam gzhas*, ff. 9–10: bod snga ma rnams kyi bden pa gnyis kyi rnam gzhas 'chad pa de ni yul can gi blo 'khrul ma 'khrul gnyis su grangs nges pa'i rgyu mtshan gyis de gnyis la phung sum sel ba'i rnam gzhas mdzad pa yin gyi/ phi rabs pa rnams 'chad pa ltar yul bden pa gnyis kyi grangs nges tshad mas grub par 'chad pa ni gcig kyang mi snang no//

¹⁵³ *Grub mtha' mdzod*, f. 145: kun rdzob bden pa'i mtshan nyid ni chos can gang zhig rig pas dpyad mi bsod pa/ don dam bden pa'i mtshan nyid gang zhig rig pas dpyad bzod pa// Also f. 200: de ltar rigs shes rjes dpag gyi rang bzhin skye med spros pa la dpyad bzod don dam bden pa'i mtshan nyid yin no shes dbu ma rang rgyud par rnams 'dod pa yin no//

¹⁵⁴ *bDen gnyis rnam gzhas*, f. 6: mdor na dbu ma'i rang lugs la kun rdzob bden pa yod par khas len pa 'de ni zla ba'i zhabs kyi phyogs snga sma ba kho na yin te/ sems tsam pas gzhan dbang kun rdzob tu bden grub yin par rang lugs su bshad pa dang khyad par mi snang pa'i

phir dang/ rang lugs la bden pa gcig kho nar nges gsung pa dang 'gal ba'i phir//; f. 7: shes bya thams cad bden pa gnyis su grangs nges pa zhes bya ba 'de dbum ma'i rang lugs ma yin te/ dbu ma'i rang lugs la gnas skabs su bden pa ni gcig khno na yin par...//; f. 8: mdor na/ dbu ma'i rang lugs la gnas skabs kyi bden ba don dam pa'i bden pa gcig pu yin la//

¹⁵⁵ *Grub mtha'i nram bshad*, f. 305: legs par dpyad na myang'das dang de las lhag pa'i chos kyang grub pa med mod rig shes kyis cung zad dpyad ngor bslu med ni/ mya ngan 'das pa bden gcig pur// gang tshe sangs rgyas rnams gsung ba// zhes pa ltar/ myang 'das kno na yin par bzhed pa'i phir//

¹⁵⁶ *Dam chos dogs sel*, p. 602: de lta bu'i de bzhin nyid dam de ni bden par grub pa yin te/ kun rdzob rnams mi bden pa rdzun pa blu ba'i chos su grub la/ de dang dral ba don dam ni bden pa rdzun med pa mi slu ba'i chos su grub ste/ de ma grub na 'phags pa'i bden pa mthong ba'ang mi srid de rdzun pa bslu ba'i don mthong bas tha mal pa ltar su yang grol bar mi 'gyur ro/ mgon po klus/ bcom ldan 'das kyis chos gang zhig/ rdzun pa de ni bgrub par gsungs shes dang/ /mya ngan 'das pa bden gcig pur/ /rgyal ba rnams kyis gang gsungs pa/ /de tshe lhag ma log pa zhes/ /mkhas pa su zhig rtog mi byed/ / ces gsung pa bzhin no// In this passage, Mi pham not only attempts to show that ultimate truth is the only truth but also takes one step further to show that ultimate truth is 'absolute', or 'truly existent' (*bden par grub pa*)".

¹⁵⁷ *D'ag brgyud grub pa'i shing rta*, f. 302: des na grub mtha gong 'od thams cad kyi lugs gang la rigs pas gnod pa med cing dpyad bzod ni don dam dang des las ldog pa kun rdzob...//

¹⁵⁸ *kLu grub dgongs rgyan*, pp. 214-215, 222, 277

¹⁵⁹ In *the Master of Wisdom* (p. 321), he writes, "ontologically, nirvāṇa is a world beyond saṃsāra".

¹⁶⁰ In his introductory analysis to *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, (p. 52) he argues, "phenomena are appearances, and appearances point to their reality. The veil gives a hint of that which is veiled". Also (p. 53) says "the absolute comprehended through the categories of thought is phenomena and phenomena stripped of these categories are the Absolute"; and (p. 57) "*tathatā* or reality is also called nirvāṇa or *dharmatā* or *dharmadhātu*. The word *dhātu* in this context means the inmost nature, the ultimate essence. The *tathatā* or *dharmadhātu* is both transcendent and immanent. It is transcendent as ultimate reality, but it is present in very one as his inmost ground and essence". Also he writes (p. 70): "In Mahāyāna we have, on the other hand, a denial of real elements (*dharmā-nairātmya*), and an assertion of the absolute Whole (*dharmā-kāya*). In Hinayāna, we have a radical pluralism; in Mahāyāna, we have a radical monism"; and he (p. 72) says: "just as Mahāyāna moved towards radical Monism, even so Brāhmanism moved towards radical Monism. It is most probable that Mahāyāna is indebted to some Upaniṣadic influence". See also pp. 51-59.

¹⁶¹ He argues "the system of pluralism which is taught to Hinayāna and to the monist view which is the central conception of Mahāyāna". See *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, p. 19.

¹⁶² In his introductory notes to *the Mādhyamika dialectic and The Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*, (p. xxvi), he argues, "in fact, there is only one truth—the Absolute. The other—*saṃvṛtisatya*, is truth so-called in common parlance, it is totally false from the Absolute standpoint". He goes on to say (p. 20) "In early Buddhism they correspond to a pluralistic universe, in Mahāyāna to a monistic". Also (p. 47) states: "The Mādhyamika system started with an entirely different conception of reality. Real was that possessed as reality of its own (*sva-bhāva*), what was not produced by causes (*akṛta*=*asaṃskṛta*, what was not dependent upon anything else (*paratra nirpekṣa*)".

¹⁶³ *bDen gnyis rnam gzhaḡ*, ff. 15–16: ‘phags pa’i mnyam gzhaḡ la ltos nas ni bden pa gcig kyang ma gzhaḡ ste/ des ni bden pa phar zhog gang du yang ma gzhigs pa’i phir ro/ /mthar spros pa thams cad dang dral ba’i rjes kyi shes pa la ltos nas ni bden ba gcig kyang ma gzhaḡ ste/ de’i tshe ni shes bya’i mtshan ma ji snyed pa thams cad brdzun par bzhaḡ dgos pa’i phir ro//...de ltar na mthar thug la ltos nas bden pa mi srid la/ gnas skabs su bden pa mtshan nyid pa don dam pa’i bden pa dang btags pa kun rdzob kyi bden pa’o/ /de’i shes byed kyang bden ‘dzin gyi ngor bden na bden par ‘gal pa la thug pa yin no// Here, Śākya mChog ldan reinforces that the ultimate truth is the only real truth in the Mādhyamika standpoint. However, it is not treated as an absolute truth. Ultimately, he says “it is to be proven false, because every object of knowledge is posited as false”. Although, he talks about the conventional truth in a detail, it is not taken as truth from the Mādhyamika standpoint. Hence, his monistic position still stands. Another crucial point to be noted here is, his categorical rejection of the dual objective basis of the two truths. He writes, f. 17: chos can gcig gi steng du kun rdzob kyi rang bzhin dang don dam pa’i kyi rang bzhin gnyis ka bden pa mi srid pa’i phir // For further clarification see ff. 17–18, 21–22.

¹⁶⁴ *Grub mtha’i rnam bshad*, f. 305 (as cited above).

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Dam chos dogs gsel*, p. 602: de lta bu’i de bzhin nyid dam de ni bden par grub pa yin te/ kun rdzob rnams mi bden pa rdzun pa bslu ba’i cho su grub la/ de dang dral ba don dam ni bden pa rdzun med pa mi bslu ba’i chos su grub ste/ de ma grub na phags pa’i bden pa mthong ba’am mi srid de rdzun pa bslu ba’i don mthong bas tha mal ba ltar su yang grol bar mi ‘gyur ro/; f. 603: yang dag kun rdzob lta bu tha snyad du bden pa yin kyang gnyis snang dang bcas pa’i blo yi yul kun rdzob ba de dag rigs pas dpyad mi bzod pa yin pa’i phir bden grub min la/ chos nyid don dam par gang yin pa ni bden grub yin te/ gnyis snang med pa’i blo yeshes kyis yul du grub pa gang zhig/ / de la rigs pa gang gis kyang gzhig cing gzhom pa’i rgyu ba mi ‘jug pa’i dpyad bzod pa yin pa’i phir/ / de na rigs pa’i dpyad mi bzod pa ji srid du ni don dam ma yin de/ kun rdzob tu thal ba’i phir//

Notes and Tibetan citations on Chapter II

¹ ‘Meaning’ and ‘sense’ are here being used to translate the Tibetan term *sdra bshad* which normally refers not merely to meaning, but also has connotations of etymology. Since most of the discussion focuses on the various senses or meanings associated with the two truths, rather than with any strict etymological analysis, I have chosen to talk of just ‘meaning’ or ‘sense’ rather than ‘etymology’.

² *Prasannapadā*, p. 415: kun nas sgrib pas na kun rdzob ste/ mi shes pa ni dngos po’i de kho na nyid la kun nas ‘gebs par byed pa’i phir kun rdzob ces bya’o/ yang na phan tshun brten pas na kun rdzob ste/ phan tshun brten pa nyid kyis na zhes bya ba’i don to/ yang na kun rdzob ni brda ste/ ‘jig rten gyi tha snyad ces bya ba’i tha tshig go/ de yang brjod pa dang brjod bya dang/ shes pa dang shes bya la sogs pa’i mtshan nyid can no// The translation of this passage is borrowed from Newland, *The Two Truths*, p. 76.

³ See Garfield, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, (p. 297) for his brief reflection on the three distinct meanings; Newland, *The Two Truths* (pp. 77–89) also offers his reading of dGe lugs pa’s presentation of the three meanings of *sanvṛti*.

⁴ *rTa shes ṭik chen*, pp. 402–403: [1] kun rdzob ni mi shes pa’i ma rig pa ste dgnos po’i de kho na nyid ‘gebs shing sgrib par byed pa’i phir ro/ ‘di ni kun rdzob kyi skad dod sgrib pa la’ang ‘jug pas de’i cha nas bshad pa yin gyi kun rdzob thams cad sgrib byed du bshad pa min no/ [2] yang na kun rdzob ni phan tshun brten pa yin pa’i don no/ ‘di ni phan tshun brten dgos

pas na rang la tshugs thub kyi rang bzhin yod pa mi bden pa'i don no/ tshul de'i sgra bshad pa'i rgyu mtshan don dam bden pa la yang yod mod kyang kun rdzob pa'i sgra 'jug pa ni min te/ dper na mtsho skyes kyi sgra bshad pa'i rgyu mtshan sbal pa la yod kyang mi 'jug pa bzhin no/ [3] yang na kun rdzob ni brda ste 'jig rten gyi tha snyad do/ 'de yang brjod bya dang rjod byed dang shes pa dang shes phyä la sogs pa'i mtshan nyid can du bshad pas yul can gyi tha snyad shes brjod tsam la bzung ngo// My translations of the three meanings of *saṃvṛti* are largely taken from Newland, *The Two Truths*, pp. 77-86.

⁵ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 377b: [1]kun nas grib pas na kun rdzob ste/ mi shes pa ni dngos po'i de kho na nyid la kun nas 'gebs par byed pa'i phir kun rdzob ces bya'o/ [2] yang na phan tshun brten pas na kun rdzob ste/ phan tshun brten ba nyid kyi na zhes bya ba'i don te/ [3] yang na kun rdzob ni brda ste/ 'jig rten gyi tha snyad ces bya ba'i tha tshig go/ de yang brjod pa dang brjod bya dang/ shes pa dang shes bya la sogs pa'i mtshan nyid can no//

⁶ Newland, *The Two Truths*, (p. 77) consistently translates *saṃvṛtisatya* (kun brdzob bden pa) as 'concealer-truth', and seems to treat *saṃvṛtisatya* and 'concealer truth' as equal and assumes it as dGe lugs pa's standard reading. I borrowed his term 'concealer-truth' and use it in the context where *saṃvṛti* is specifically referred to primal ignorance, however I do not consider them equivalent. Especially in Tsong khapa's sense *saṃvṛti* carries a much wider application. All phenomenal objects can be described as *saṃvṛtisatya* but certainly not as concealer truth, because phenomenal objects themselves do not conceal truth. Rather they are the truths. However, Newland's rendition is consistent with Go rampa's reading, for in the case of Go rampa, every *saṃvṛtisatya* amounts to concealing the underlying truth. And phenomena themselves are not seen as truths. They are rather considered as total illusions.

⁷ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p.185. Also see *rTsa shes tik chen*, p. 403-404. mKhas grub rJe (see Cabezón, *A Dose Emptiness*, pp. 361) also offers similar explanations.

⁸ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 377b: dang po ni/ saṃvṛtisatya zhes pa'i sam ni samyang ste yang dag pa/ vṛti ni sgrib par byed pa ste yang dag pa'i don la sgrib par byed pas na kun brtags and lhan skyes so sor ma phyä ba'i bden 'dzin gyi gti mug ni kun rdzob kyi mtshan gzhi ste yang dag pa'i don la sgrib par byed pa'i phir ro/ satya ni bden pa ste blo de'i ngor bden par snang bas na bden pa'o//

⁹ *lTa ba ngan sel*, ff. 595-596: lam gyi dgag bya ni 'khrul ba'i snang ba mtha' dag yin la/ 'der lung rigs kyi dgag bya gnyis las/ dang po yang kun btags kyi ma rig pas btags pa dang/ lhan skyes kyi ma rig pas btags pa gnyis...gnyis pa yul can ni/ yul de dang der rtog pa'i blo dang lta ba ngan pa thams cad yin te//

¹⁰ *Lam rim chen mo*, p. 651-652:phyin ci log gi 'dzin pa la dgag byar gsungs pa dang des bzung pa'i rang bzhin yod pa la dgag byar mdzad pa gnyis yod do//

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 652:'on kyang dgag bya'i gtso bo ni phyi ma yin te/ yul can phyin ci log ldog pa des bzung pa'i yul thog mar dgag dgos pa's so//

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 652:dgag bya 'di ni shes bya la med pa zhig dgos ste/ yod na dgag par mi nus pa'i phyir ro//

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 652: de lta yin na yang yod par 'dzin pas sgro 'dogs skye bas dgag dgos la// For more elaborations on dGe lugs pa's position on the epistemological and the soteriological objects of negation see dGeshes Yeshe Thabs mkhas, *Drang nges*, pp. 161-162; 'Jam dbyangs bZhad pa, *Grub mtha' rnam bshad*, pp. 811-816; LCang skya, *Grub mtha' mdzes rgyan*, pp. 284-288; Thub stan Chos grags, *sPyod 'jug 'grel bshad*, pp. 720-724; and mKhas grub rJe (see Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*), pp. 92-96, 161-1624.

¹⁴ *Madhyamakāvatārsyaṭikā*, p.73d: sgrib pa ni nram pa gnyis te/ nyon mongs pa'i sgrib pa can gyi dang/ nyon mongs pa can ma yin par ma rig pa'o/ de la nyon mongs pa can gyi ma rig pa ni 'khor ba'i rgyun 'jug ba'i rgyu yin la/ nyon mongs pa can ma yin pa'i ma rig pa ni gzugs la sogs pa snang pa'i rgu yin no//

- ¹⁵ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 185: kun rdzob pa gang gi ngor 'jog pa'i kun rdzob ngos 'dzin pa yin gyi/ kun rdzob pa spyi ngo 'dzin pa min no//
- ¹⁶ See Tsong khapa's first sense of *kun rdzob* in the *rTs shes tik chen*, p. 402.
- ¹⁷ *rTa shes tik-chen*, p. 404: nyon mongs pa can gyi ma rig pa'i dbang gis kun rdzob kyi bden pa nam par bzhag go//
- ¹⁸ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 186: kun rdzob bden 'dzin de'i mthus sngon po la sogs pa gang zhig/ rang bzhin gyis grub ma med bzhin du der snang bar bcos pa'i bcos ma sems can rnams la bden par snang ba de ni/ sngar bshad pa'i 'jig rten gyi phyin ci log gi kun rdzob pa de'i ngor bden pas 'jig rten gyi kun rdzob gyi bden pa zhes thub pa des gsungs te//
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 186: rang zhin de... ni kun rdzob kye bden pa ma yin no//
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 188: bden 'dzin des bzhag pa ni rang gi tha snyad du yang mi srid par bzhad pa'i phir ro//
- ²¹ *rTa shes tik chen*, pp. 404-405: nyon mongs pa can gyi ma rig pa ni bden 'dzin yin pas dis bzung pa'i don tha snyad du yang mi srid pa'i phir dang/ kun rdzob kyi bden pa yin na tha snyad du yod pas khab pa'i phir ro//
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 404: dnos po la bden par grub pa me srid pas bden par 'jog pa ni blo'i ngor yin la/ bden 'dzin min pa'i blo ngor bden par gzhag tu med pa'i phir ro//
- ²³ *Mulamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna*, p. 85.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 404: bden pa ni ma yin te bden par mngon par rlom pa med pa'i phir ro//
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 404: byis pa rnams ni slu bar byid pa yin la des las gzhan pa rnams la ni sgyu ma la sogs pa ltar rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba nyid kyis kun rdzob tsam du 'gyur ro//
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 405: nyon mongs can gyi ma rig pa'i kun rdzob spangs pa rnams la/ gang gi ngor bden par 'jog pa'i bden zhen gyi kun rdzob med pa'i rgyu mtshan gis/ 'du 'byed rnams de dag gi ngor mi bdden par bsgrubs kyi kun rdzob bden pa ma yin par ma bsgrubs pa'i phir ro//
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 611.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 611: 'phags pa gsum gyi rjes thob la snang ba'i 'du 'byed kyi cha de yang yang dag sbrib gyed de gnyis snang gyi bag chags kyi dbang gyis byung bas snang med kyi mnyam gzhag la sgrib par byed pa'i phir ro// Jaideva Singh, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, (p. 53) endorses Go rampa's view and argues "that which covers all round is *saṃvṛti*. *Samvṛti* is *ajñāna* (primal ignorance) which covers the real nature of all things. Phenomena are characterised as *saṃvṛti*, because they throw a veil over reality".
- ³⁰ Refer to the above immediate quotation.
- ³¹ *Madhyamakāvatārasyaṭikā*, p. 73b-c: gal te nyon mongs pa can gyi ma rig pa log pa yin na de'i tshe sgyu ma la sogs pa ltar rten cing 'brel par 'byung pa rnams ci ltar snang zhe na/ ... shes bya'i sgrib pa'i mtshan nyid can ma rig pa tsam kun du spyod pa'i phir//
- ³² *Legs bshad snying po*, p.138:de ltar rgu dang rkyen la brten nas 'byung ba'i gtan tshigs nyid kyis chos rnams las rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa'i rang bzhin med do//
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 141: chos can rten 'brel dang chos nyid don dam pa'i bden pa gnyis rten dang rten par yod pa ni tha snyad pa'i shes ngor yin la.../ chos can med na chos nyid yan gar ba gnas pa'i mthu med.../
- ³⁴ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 377c: sam zhes pa ni rten pa'am ltos pa la 'jug la vṛti ni 'jug pa ste brten nas 'jug pa'am ltos nas 'jug pa 'o//
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 382b: thog ma med pa'i bden 'dzhin gyi bag chags sam tshe 'der grub mtha' ngan pa thos pa'i rkyen gyis yod med sogs kyi mtha' gang rüŋ gcig bzung nas dngos po de'i ngor sgro btags pas na rnyed ces pa'i tha snyad 'jog ste//
- ³⁶ *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, pp. 244-245.
- ³⁷ See his preface on *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, p. 53.

³⁸ *Prasannapadā*, p. 415: yang na kun rdzob ni brda ste/ 'jig rten gyi tha snyad ces bya ba'i tha tshig go/ de yang brjod pa dang brjod bya dang/ shes pa dang shes bya la sogs pa'i mtshan nyid can no//

³⁹ *rTa shes 'tik chen*, p. 403: Yul can gyi tha snyad shes brjod tsam la mi bzung ngo//

⁴⁰ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 377c: *saṃ* ni saṅket zhes pa brda yin la vṛti ni snga ma ltar te brda 'jug pas na kun rdzob ste//

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 377c: de gnyis la'ang satya zhes pa sbyar ba'i tshe ltos nas 'jug pa'ang yin blo 'khrul ba'i ngor bden pa'ang yin pas na kun rdzob bden pa dang/ brda 'jug pa yin//

⁴² *Madhyamakāvatāra* p. 156. Also cited in the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, p. 102: gti mug rang bzhin sgrib phir kun rdzob ste// des gang bcos ma bden par snang de ni// kun rdzob bden zhes thub pa des gsungs te// bcos mar gyur pa'i dngos ni kun rdzob tu'o/XI:28/ I disagree Huntington's translation of this stanza. He clearly equates the first *kun rdzob* and the latter *kun rdzob*, treats both as having the same meaning, and thus unambiguously renders both with what he describes as the "screen", a Tibetan equivalent of *sgrib byed*. See *The Emptiness of Emptiness*, p. 160.

⁴³ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 186: rkang pa dang pos stan pa'i kun rdzob dang/ rkang pa phyi ma gnyis kyis bstan pa'i kun rdzob gnyis gcig tu me bya ste//

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 185: rang bzhin gyis yod par sgro 'dogs par byed pa yin lugs kyi rang bzhin mthong ba la sgrib pa'i bdag nyid can ni kur rdzob bo//

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 185: kun rdzob pa gang gi ngor 'jog pa'i kun rdzob ngos 'dzin pa yin gyi/ kun rdzob pa spyir ngos 'dzin pa min no//

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 185: kun de ni kun rdzob kyi skad dod sgrib byed la yang 'jug pas sgrib byed do//

⁴⁷ *rTsa shes 'tik chen*, pp. 404–405: kun rdzob kyi bden pa yin na tha snyad du yod pas khyab pa'i phir ro//

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 404: nyon mongs can gyi ma rig pa ni bden 'dzhin yin pas dis bzung ba'i don tha snyad du yang mi srid pa'i phir//

⁴⁹ *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, p. 103: de'i phir de dang gang zhig kun rdzob tu yang rdzun pa ni kun rdzob kyi bden pa ma yin no//

⁵⁰ *Grub mtha' mdzod*, f. 193: *saṃvṛti* zhes bya ba sgrib par byed pas na kun rdzob ste/ yang dag pa'i don la sgrib par byed pa 'khrul pa'i shes pa'o/ de'i yul du bden pas na bden pa ste gzugs la sogs pa sna tsogs pa'i chos snang pa'i ngo bo rmi lam dang 'dra ba 'de nyid do//

⁵¹ *gZung lugs legs bshad*, 72b: kun rdzob bden pa'i ngo bo ni/ snang ba yul dang yul can te/ gzung 'dzin gyis bsdus pa'i chos thams cad do/ de dag la ci'i phyr kun rdzob kyi bden pa zhes bya zhe na/ kun ni shes bya'i gnas yin la/ rdzob ni sgrib ba ste// His dialectical structure seems to differ a little bit in the sense that for him, *kun* refers to the mode of being of all objects and *rdzob* refers to all objects of knowledge because they are the ones that conceal their own mode of being. Also see *Thub pa dgongs gsal*, p. 32b.

⁵² *bDen gnyis rnam gzhaq*, ff. 30: dbang po'i ni...ma rig pa la kun rdzob ces bya zhing/ de la'ang nyon mongs pa can yin min gnyis las/ dang po'i ngor bden pa na bden pa zhes bya'o// gnyis pa ni/ phan tshun brten pas na kun rdzob ces bya ste mi bden pa zhes bya ba'i don to// gsum pa ni/ 'jig rten gyi tha snyad kyis bzhaq pas ni kun rdzob ces bya ste/ don dam par ma grub pa zhes bya ba'i don to// gsum po de yang/ go rim bzhin du *saṃvṛti* zhes dang/ *saṃketu* zhes dang/ *saṃbhar* zhes bya ba'i sgra las drangs pa'o// Also see ff. 30–31 for more details on this issue.

⁵³ *dBu tsa'i rnam bshad zab mo*, p. 288.

⁵⁴ In his introduction to *Mādhyamikā Dialectic and The Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*, p. xxv, he argues "as etymology shows, *saṃvṛti* is that which covers up entirely the real nature of things and makes them appear otherwise. In this sense it is identical with *avidyā* the categorising function of the mind-reasoning... It may also mean the mutual dependence of

things—their relativity. In this sense it is equated with phenomena, and is in direct contrast with the absolute which is by itself, unrelated. The third definitions of *saṃvṛti* is that which is of conventional nature (*saṃketa*), depending as it does on what is usually accepted by the common folk (*lokavyavahāra*)."

⁵⁵ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 190: *nyon mongs can gyi ma rig pa ni... 'gal zla mi thun phyogs gangs zag dang chos rang bzhin gis grub par sgro 'dogs pa'o/ /* Tsong khapa maintains that the Prāsaṅgika's identification of a deluded concealer (*nyon sgrib, kleśāvaraṇas*) is unique and has to be contrasted with the positions of the Abhidharmikas and even of the Svātantrikas. The Abhidharmikas and Svātantrikas contrast the conception of the essence of self, and the conception of essence of phenomena. They categorise only the latter under the umbrella of deluded ignorance and the former under the umbrella of the view of the substantial 'I' and 'Mine' Principle (*'jig tshogs la lta ba, satkāya-dṛṣṭi*). See pp. 190, 191–195.

⁵⁶ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 196: *nyon mongs pa'i bag chags rnams shes sgrib yin te/ de'i 'bras bu gnyis snang 'khrul pa'i cha thams cad kyang der bsdu'o/ /nyon mongs kyi sa bon la bag chags su bzhag pa gcig dang/ nyon mongs gyi sa bon min pa'i bag chags gnyis las shes sgrib tu 'jog pa ni phyi ma te/ nyon mongs kyi sa bon thams cad zad pas bden 'dzin mi skye yang/ bag chags kyi bslad pas snang yul la 'khrul pa'i blo skyed pa'o/ /* Also see pp. 195–198 for further details.

⁵⁷ *Madhyamakāvatārasyaṭik*, p.73c: *ma rig pa nam pa gnyis te/ nyon mongs pa can dang/ nyon mongs pa can ma yin pa'o/ de la nyon mongs pa can ni mi shes pa gang bdag dang bdag ge'o snyam pa'i mngon par zhen pa skyed pa'i sgo nas 'khor ba'i rgyu gyur pa'o/ nyon mongs pa can ma yin pa ni gang gzugs la sogs pa rnams snang ba tsam gyi rgu yin gyi bden par mnong par zhen pa'i rgu ni ma yin no/ /*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 73c: *de la nyon mongs pa can ma yin pa'i ma rig pa tsam kun du spyod pa'i phyir nyan thos la sogs pa rnams la sgyu ma la sogs pa bzhin du rten cing 'grel par 'gyung ba rnams kun rdzob tsam du snang ba yin no/ /*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73c: *bden par zhin par med pa nyid kyi 'dod chags la sogs pa'i nyon mongs pa rnams skyed par mi byed pas nyon mongs pa can ma yin pa'o zhes bya'o/ /*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 73c: *sngon po la sogs pa'i nam pa dang bcas pa'i shes pa nyams su myong ba mi mnga' ba'i sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams la ni kun rdzob tsam snang ba med pa'o/ /*

⁶¹ *Iti I.14* (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 3.

⁶² *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 389a–d explains his own position; also offers his objections to Tsong khapa's view. See p. 38b–d and pp. 390a–393b.

⁶³ *lTa ba ngan sel*, ff. 540–558, 727–729, 738.

⁶⁴ *Madhyamakāvatārasyaṣṭikā*, p.73a–d.

⁶⁵ *Grub mtha' mdzod*, f. 269: *sems rab tu ma zhi bar byed pa gang mi dge ba'am/ sgrib pa lung du ma stan pa'i ngo bo ser sna la sogs pa ni nyon sgrib yin la/ khor gsum la bden zhin dang ma dral ba gang bde ba zag bcas sam ma sgribs lung ma stan gyi ngo bo gzung 'dzin gyi rtogs pa yul yul can ni shes sgrib yi no/ /*

⁶⁶ *bDu 'jug rnam bshad*, p. 127–129: *de la ma rig pa ni gnyis te/ nyon mongs pa can dang/ nyon mongs pa can ma yin pa'o/ /dang po ni bdag dang bdag gi bar mngon par zhen pa'i sgo nas 'khor ba'i rgyur gyur pa'o/ /gnyis pa ni gzugs sogs chos su mngon par zhen pa'i sgo nas yul dang yul can du snang ba skyed pa'o/ /dang po ni gang zhag gi bdag med pa sgoms pas spongs ngo/ /phyi ma ni chos su bdag med pa goms pas spong ngo/ /*

⁶⁷ *Rigs tsogs dka' gnad*, ff. 109–123.

⁶⁸ *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, ff. 236–237, 274–278.

⁶⁹ See *'Jug pa'i dka' gnad*, ff. 477–486 for a detailed analysis of the definitions of the two concealers (*sgrib gnyis*); *dBu 'jug rnam bshad*, ff. 328–33 for his account; *Don dam rnam bshad*, ff.

169–171 for his critique of dGe lugs pa's view; *Kun rdzob bden pa'i rnam bshad*, ff. 126–143 for more of his critique of dGe lugs pa view; and ff. 143–150, for more on his own position.

⁷⁰ *brGal lan nyin byed snang ba*, p. 518: gang zag gi bdag med rtogs pas nyon sgrib dang chos kyī bdag med rtogs pas shes sgrib spong ba'lang sems tsam nas tha' gyur ba'i bar de bzhed pa la khyad med cing brjod tshul phra mo re mi 'dra ba yang don khyad med pa yin pas thams cad lam gyi gnad la dgongs pa gcig ces brjod do// He argues that there is no difference between the positions of Cittmatrins, Svātantrika's, and Prāsaṅgikas as far as they all accept that the knowledge of the selflessness of person eradicates deluded concealers and the knowledge of the selflessness of phenomena eradicates concealers of true knowledge. Also see Mi pham's (p. 487–518 detailed objections on bLo bzang Rab gsal's position.

⁷¹ *kLu grub dgongs rgyan*, p. 182.

⁷² In *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa* (p. 34), he argues: "The *Mahāyānist* says that Reality is veiled not only by *kleśāvaraṇa* but also by *jñeyāvaraṇa* or the veil that hides true knowledge. The removal, therefore, of *jñeyāvaraṇa* is also necessary. This is possible by the realisation of *dharmanairātmya* or *dharmaśūnyatā*, the egolessness and emptiness of all elements of existence".

⁷³ In his article 'Madhyamaka,' he argues: "the Madhyamaka school claims to find the true 'middle way' by declaring, not only the unreality of the individuals (*pudgala nairātmya*), but also the unreality of the dharmas themselves; it denies the existence of not only the beings who suffers, but also of pain. Everything is void". See the *Mādhyamika Dialectic and the Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*, p. 150; also see pp. 149, 151.

⁷⁴ "In the Absolute,...all elements of existence have vanished, because all of them, whether they be called defilers, or the creative power of life, or individual existences, or groups of elements, have totally vanished. This all systems of philosophy admit, i.e., that the Absolute is a negation of the Phenomenal". See *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, p. 198; also see pp. 10, 195–196.

⁷⁵ In his studies on the *Yuktiṣaṣṭika*, *The Master of Wisdom* (p. 259), he argues: "reality is beyond all ontological and epistemological dualities (*dvaya*), while the empirical world of origination, destruction, and so forth is illusory—due merely to ignorance (*avidyā*)".

⁷⁶ In the *Mādhyamika Dialectic and the Philosophy of Nāgārjuna* (p. xxvii), states, "of constructive imagination are born attachment, aversion and infatuation, depending (respectively) on our good, evil and stupid attitudes. Entities which depend on these are not anything by themselves".

⁷⁷ *kLu grub dgongs rgyan*, p. 182: mdor na rang cag tha mal pa mams la snang zhing/ shing rta mnam bdun gyi rigs pas dum bo stong du bzhigs kyang ldog du med pa'i snang ba 'de kun shes sgrib kho rang gam kho yis nus pa zhig yin par snang/...snang pa'i rnam bzhag 'de kun rigs ngor yongs su rdzogs par zhig pa na nyon sgrib spangs pa dang/ snang ngor yongs su rdzog par zhig pa na shes sgrib spangs pa yin no zhes slo dpon lda ba drags pa ni sgrib gnyis zad pa'i sangs rgyas la de ltar med par snang ngo// cog rtse snying thag pa nas mthong pa nyon sgrib dang/ mig gis yod par mthong pa tsam shes sgrib ste//

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Nibbaddhika Sutta*, AN VI.63 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 1.

⁸⁰ *Bodhicāryāvatāra*, p. 84: ji ltar mthong thos shes pa dag/ 'der ni dgag par bya min te/ //der ni sdug bsngal rgyur gyur ba/ bden par rtog pa ldog bya yin/26/ For two slightly different ways of translating this verse, see Crosby and Skilton, *Śāntideva: Bodhicāryāvatāra*, p. 117 and Sharma, *Śāntideva's Bodhicāryāvatāra*, p. 388.

⁸¹ *Koṭṭhita Sutta*, SN XXXV.191 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 1.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Prasannapadā*, p.416b: don yang de yin la dam pa yang de yin pas na don dam pa'o/ de nyid bden pa yin pas don dam pa'i bden pa'o// Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*, (p. 360) offers another way of translating this passage.

⁸⁴ *rTsa shes tik chen*, p. 411: don dang dam pa gyis ka don dam bden pa nyid la bzhed do//

⁸⁵ mKhas grub rJe (see Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*, p. 360) also for emphasis on the same point.

⁸⁶ *rTsa shes tik chen*, p. 411: don dam bden pa'i bden tshul ni/ mi slu ba yin la de yang gnas tshul bzhan du gnas shing snang tshul gzhan du snang nas 'jig rten la mi slu ba'i phir//

⁸⁷ *Dhamma-niyama Sutta*, AN III.137 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu although, I chose to use the term "regularity" instead of his term "steadfast", and "*dukkha*" instead of "stress"), p. 1.

⁸⁸ *Paccaya Sutta* SN XII.20 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 1.

⁸⁹ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 377d: phags pa'i yeshes dam pa'i spyod yul du gyur pa'i chos nyid ni rtogs par bya'am brtag par bya ba yin pas na don/ 'de las mchog tu gyur pa gzhan med pas na dam pa mi slu pas na bden ba zhes gzhi mthun gyis bldu ba ste//

⁹⁰ *Madhyamakāvatārasyabhāṣya*, p. 74a-b: dam pa 'jig rten las 'das pa'i yeshe yin la/ don ni de'i yul yin pa'i phyir don dam pa yin la/ de yang bden pa nyid yin te/ mi slu ba'i phir ro/ yang na mchog tu gyur pa'i don ni don dam pa yin te/ de yang stong pa nyid do/ stong pa nyid las lhag pa'i dngos po mchog tu gyur pa med pas so//

⁹¹ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 714: gnas skabs der rtogs bya dang rtogs byed dam yul yul can tha dad du med pa'i phir ro// Also see ff. 727–729.

⁹² *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, f. gnyis snang med pa'i yeshes yul med du bshad//

⁹³ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f.611: de yang gzh gcig nyid snang tshul gyis sgo nas so sor phye ba yin gyi yul gyi ngos nas so sor yod pa ni ma yin no//

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, ff. 612-3: don dam pa'i bden pa ni 'phags pa'i so so rang rig pa'i yeshe kyis gnyis snang nub ba'i tshul gyis myang bar bya ba yin gyi/ gnyis snang dang bcas na rnam mkyen gyi bar gyi yul yang don dam bden pa ma yin//

⁹⁵ *Grub mtha' mdzod*, ff. 193: paramārtha zhes pas/ nges par legs pa'i don du gnyer ba rnams kyis gnyer bya'i 'bras bu yin pas don dam pa/ de nyid blo ma 'khrul pa'i ngo bo rig pa'i shes pa'o/ de nyid gya nom pa mchog tu gyur pa yin pas kyang dam pa ste/ blo ma 'khrul ba de'i yul du bden pas na bden pa ste de zhin nyid do//

⁹⁶ *Thub pa dgongs gsal*, p. 32b: don dam pa la paramārtha ste/ param ni mchog gam dam pa/ artha ni don te dam pa rnams kyis brtags na skyon med pa'i don yin pas na don dam pa zhes bsgyur// Also see *gZung lugs legs bshad*, p. 72b for more details.

⁹⁷ *Don dam rnam bshad*, f. 185: sangs rgyas kyis sas bsdu pa'i chos yin na/ kun rdzob kyis bden pa ma yin dgos te/ de yin na chos sku yin dgos la/ de yin na/ kun rdzob kyis bden pa ma yin pa dgos pa'i phir...//; f. 186: stong nyid mngon sum du rtogs pa'i slob pa'i mnyam bzahag yeshes rnams kyang don dam pa'i bden par thal ba ma yin nam snam na/de yang 'dir 'dod dgos pa yin te/ don dam pa dngos yin pa'i phir dang...//; f. 187: yeshes de chos can/ don dam pa'i bden pa yin te/ stong nyid dngos su rtogs pa'i mnyam bzahag yishes kyis dngos kyis gzhal bya mtshan nyid pa yin pa'i phir/ rtags grub ste/ yeshes de so sor rang gis rig pa'i yeshes yin pa'i phir// In these statements, he equates the status of the wisdom of meditative equipoise of *āryas* and ultimate truth. "Ultimate truth, after all is the wisdom of the meditative equipoise. There is no ultimate truth apart from this wisdom. This wisdom itself serves as the apprehended object of the wisdom of the meditative equipoise" For this see, f. 187: stong pa nyid mngon sum du rtogs pa'i mnyam gzahag yeshes kyis gzhal bya dgos ni/ yeshes de nyid yin gyi/ stong pa nyid ces bya ba gzhan sel dang/ ldog pa med dgag gi gyur pa de nyid de'i dgnos kyis gzhal bya ma nyin no// Also see *bde gnyis rnam gzahag*, ff. 29-30 for more on this issue.

⁹⁸ *dBu tsa'i rnam bshad zab mo*, pp. 287: yul can yeshes kyang don dam pa ste/ don dam pa yul du yod pa'i phir/ yul skye ba med par bstan pa la sogs pa dang/ yul can stong pa nyid kyi don thos pa dang/ bsam pa dang/ sgom pa las byung pa'i shes rab dag kyang don dam pa zhes bya ste/ don dam rtogs pa'i thabs yin pa'i phir dang/ phyi ci ma log pa yin pa'i phir// Interestingly, he expressly equates the subjective consciousnesses of *āryas* and buddha with the status of ultimate truth. In other words, instead of treating the verifying cognition of ultimate truth as conventional, he treats it as ultimate truth itself. Also see, *dBu tsa'i rnam bshad zab mo*, p. 287: don dam pa nyid bden pa yin pas/ don dam pa'i bden pa ste/ rnam pa thams cad du de bzhin du gnas pa'i phir/ yul can yeshes kyang don dam pa ste/ don dam pa yul du yod pa'i phir/ yul skye ba med par bstan pa la sogs pa dang/ yul can stong pa nyid kyi don thos pa dang/ bsam pa dang/ sgom pa las byung pa'i shes rab dag kyang don dam pa zhes bya ste/ don dam rtogs pa'i thabs yin pa'i phir dang/ phyi ci ma log pa yin pa'i phir/ 'de ni rjes su mthun pa bstan no//

⁹⁹ *D'ag brgyud grub pa'i shing rta*, f. 279: 'phags pa'i mnyam gzahag la ma ltos pa'am/ de las tha dad pa'i don du grub pa ni ma yin cing/ don dam pa'i bden pa las tha dad pa'i phags pa'i mnyam gzahag kyang yod pa ma yin no// He expressly equates ultimate truth with the wisdom of the meditative equipoise and categorically denies any distinction between the two.

¹⁰⁰ *Madhyamakāvatāra*, p.155: dngos kun yang dag brdzun pa mthong ba yis/ dngos rnyed ngo bo gyis ni 'dzin par 'gyur/ yang dag mthong yul gang de de nyid de/ mthong ba brdzun pa kun rdzob bden par gsungs/VI:23/ Also see the *Madhayamkāvatārabhāṣya* of Candrakīrti, p. 98. I have largely borrowed Newland's translation of this verse. See *The Two Truths*, p. 95. Huntington, *The Emptiness of Emptiness*, (p. 160) offers very different way of translating the same verse. He translates *yang dag mthong pa* as "correct perception" instead of "perceivers of falsities" and *mthong ba rdzun pa* as "incorrect perception" instead of "perceivers of reality".

¹⁰¹ *The Two Truths*, p. 96.

¹⁰² *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 175: kun rdzob bden pa 'jog byed brdzun pa mthong bas rnyed don...shes bya brdzun pa slu ba'i don 'jal ba'i tha snyad pa'i tse mas rnyed pa'o// See Newland, (1997), p. 95.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 175: yang dag pa'i don mthong ba ste 'jal pa'i rigs shes kyis rnyed pa'i yul gang yin pa de ni/ de nyid de don dam pa'i bden pa ste// Also see Tsong khapa in the *rTsa shes 'tik chen*, p. 406; and Guy Newland (1992), p. 96.

¹⁰⁴ Exterior phenomena include six spheres of senses, namely, form, sound, aroma, taste, tactile objects and ideas or concepts.

¹⁰⁵ Interior phenomena include six sense organs, namely, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind and six consciousnesses, namely, eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness and mental consciousness.

¹⁰⁶ *rTsa shes 'tik chen*, p. 406: phyi nang gi ngos po 'di mams re re la yang don dam pa dang kun rdzob pa'i ngo bo gnyis gnyis yod de/ de yang myu gu lta bu gcig la mtson na/ shes bya yang dag pa de kho na'i don gzigs pa'i rigs shes kyis rnyed pa'i myu gu ngo bo'o/ shes bya rdzun pa slu ba'i don 'jal ba'i tha snyad pa'i shes pas rnyed pa'i myu gu'i ngo bo 'o/ de'i snga ma ni myu gu'i don dam bden pa'i ngo bo yin la phyin ma ni myu gu'i kun rdzob bden pa'i ngo bo'o//

¹⁰⁷ *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, p. 98: bden pa gnyis kyis rang gyi ngo bo phyin ci ma log pa mkhyen pa sangs rgyas bcom ldan das rnam kyis/ 'du byed dang myu gu la sogs pa nang dang phyi ro gyi dgos po thams cad kyi rang gyi ngo bo rnam pa gnyis nye bar bstan ste// Cited in the *rTsa shes 'tik chen*, p. 406.

¹⁰⁸ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 173: 'dis ni myu gu lta bu gcig gi ngo bo la'ang phye na kun rdzob yin pa dang/ don dam yin pa'i ngo bo gnyis yod par ston gyi myu gu gcig nyid so skye and 'phags pa la ltos nas bden pa gnyis su bstan pa gtan min no//

¹⁰⁹ *The Emptiness of Emptiness*, p. 160.

¹¹⁰ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 603: de ltar blo'i sgo nas ngo bo gnyis 'dzin pa'i mthong ba yang dag pa'i yul ni don dam bden pa yin la/ mthong ba brdzun pa'i yul ni kun rdzob bden pa'o//

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, f. 603: sangs rgyas bcom blden 'das kyis gdul bya la tha snyad pa'i sgo nas gnas lugs bstan pa'i tshe/ dngos po thams cad la kun rdzob dang don dam pa'i ngo bo gnyis bstan ste/ dngos po thams cad la 'phags pa'i mnyam bzhag yeshes kyis rang gi ngo bo stong nyid rnyed pa dang/ brdzun pa mthong ba'i so so'i skyes po'i blos rdzun pa'i stobs las rang gi ngo bo yod par rnyed pa la bden pa gnyis su bzhag pa yin...//

¹¹² *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 375b: brdzun pa mthong ba dang/ yang dag mthong ba gnyis sam/ 'khrul ma khrul gnyis/ rmongs ma rmongs gnyis/ phyin ci log ma log gnyis sam/ tshad ma yin min gnyis kyis mthong tshul gyi sgo nas kun rdzob den pa dang/ don dam bden pa gyis su phye ba ste// Also see p. 375b–d for his detailed defence of each of those assertions.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 384c: bden pa gnyis yul can gyi blo rmongs ma rmongs sam brdzun pa mthong ba dang/ yang dag mthong ba'am/ 'khrul ma 'khrul gyi sgo nas 'jog dgos pas yul can gyi blo'i sgo nas 'jog pa pa ni rgya gar gyi thal rang thams cad mthun par snang la//

¹¹⁴ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 604: gzhan yang myu gu ngo bo cig nyid la/ bden pa gnyis kyi ming gis btags pa'i btags don tha snyad du rnyed par thal/ myu gu'i ngo bo yin par gyur pa'i bden gnyis kyi ngo bo gnyis yod pa'i phir/ yul can 'phags pa'i mnyam bzhag dis mthongs ba brdzun pas rnyed pa'i rnyed don de mthong par thal/ de mthong ba yang dag pas rnyed pa'i rnyed don la sgrub 'jug gang zhig yul de gnyis ngo bo gcig yin pa'i phir//

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, f. 604: myu gu'e ngo bor gyur pa'i kun rdzob kyi ngo bo de de'i ngo bor gyur pa'i don dam gyi ngo bor yin par thal/ di gnyis ngo bo gcig yin pa'i phir/ 'dod na/ mthong a brdzun pas rnyed pa'i ngo bo de mthong ba yang dag pas rnyed pa'i ngo bo yin par thal/ 'dod pa'i phir/ 'dod na/ mthong ba rdzun pas rnyed pa de mthong ba yang dag pas rnyed par thal/ 'dod pa de'i phir/ 'dod na/ de gnyis yul gyi ngo go rnyed tsul khyad par med par 'gyur ro//

¹¹⁶ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 370a: tshig gis rjod par bya ba ma yin zhing/ blos yul du bya ba ma yin pa'i phir te//

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 370a: don dam bden pa 'phags pa'i mnyam bzhag gis je ltar spros pa dang dral pa'i tshul kyis myong ba ltar mtshan nyid dang mtshan gzhi sogs gang gyis kyang bstan par mi nus te//

¹¹⁸ Notes on the 'Yuktiṣaṣṭikā', *Master of Wisdom*, p. 259.

¹¹⁹ No wonder that there are some dialectical parallels in their definitions. Both, Tsong khapa and Go rampa after all are glossing the same verse [VI: 23] of the *Madhyamakāvatāra* in the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, p. 98: dngos kun yang dag brdzun pa mthong ba yis/ dngos rnyed ngo bo gyis ni 'jin par 'gyur/ yang dag mthong yul gang de de nyid de/ mthong ba brdzun pa kun rdzob bden par gsungs//

¹²⁰ *Madhyamakāvatārasyaṭikā*, p. 70d: yang dag mthong ba ste/ dngos po'i rang bzhin phyin ci ma log pa thogs su chud pa'i sangs rgyas bcom ldan ldas mams so/ de mams kye yul gang yin pa de ni de kho na nyid do/ de dag gi yul dang yul can gyi dngos po ni yul dang yul can mi dmigs pa gang yin pa'o/... mthog ba brdzun pa ni phyin ci ma log pa'i de kho na nyid ma rtogs pa dang ngos po rdzun pa mams la mngon par zhen pas so de mams kyi yul gang yin pa de ni kun rdzob yin no zhes pa'o//

¹²¹ See the *Master of Wisdom* for his introductory notes, p. xx–xxi.

¹²² *Madhyamakāvatārasyaṭikā*, p. 71a: gnyis mi dmigs pa'i sgo nas gang nyams su myong ba spros pa thams cad dang dral pa'i rang bzhin can yin...//

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 71a: don dam pa'i gnas skabs na ni yul dang yul can cung zad kyang yod pa ma yin no//

¹²⁴ *Grub mtha'mdzod*, ff. 203–204: kun rdzob kyi mtshan nyid gzung 'dzin spros pa dang bcas pa'i rnam par snang ba/ de'ang sgrib ba'i rnam par skyes pa ste//... don dam bden pa'i tshan nyid ni gzung 'dzin spros pa dang bral pa'i ngo bo//

¹²⁵ *gZhung lugs legs bshad*, p. 72b: kun rdzob bden pa'i ngo bo ni snang ba yul dang yul can te/ gzung 'dzin gyis bsdus pa'i chos thams cad do/ de dag la ci'i phir kun rdzob kyi bden pa zhes bya zhe na/ kun ni shes bya'i gnas yin la/ rdzob ni sgrib ba ste// don dam bden pa'i ngo bo ni/ rigs pa yul dang bcas pa ste/ rigs pa ni sangs rgyas kyi yeshes dang byang chu sems dpa'i rnams kyis mnyam par gzhag pa'i shes pa dang/ so so skye bo'i gcig dang du bral la sogs pa/ spros pa gcod byed kyi rigs pa yin la/ rigs pa'i yul ni rigs pa des gtan la phab pa'am/ des rtogs pa'i chos rnams kyi chos nyid spros pa dang dral ba'o//

¹²⁶ *bDu 'jug rnam bshad*, p. 121: 'de la don dam pa ni 'phags pa rnams kyis yang dag pa'i yeshes kyi yul du bdag gi dngos po rnyed pa gang yin pa'o // kun rdzob ni so so skye po ma rig pa'i ling thog gyis blo gros kyi mig bsgrib pa rnams kyis rdzun pa thong pa ma rig stobs kyis bdag gi dngos po rnyed pa gang yin pa'o//

¹²⁷ *Shes 'grel ke ta ka*, p. 3: de la kun rdzob ni so skye sogs kyi rang bzhin med bzhin du der snang pa sgyu ma dang rmi lam skra shad lta bu'i snang tshul 'de yin la// aslo in the *zla ba'i zhal lung*, ff. 80–81: de la yang dag pa'i yeshes kyi mthong yul gang de de nyid de don dam yin la/ mthong ba brdzun pa ye yul ni kun rdzob bden par gsungs so// Not only does he dichotomise the two truths on the basis of two conflicting experiences, i.e., of ordinary beings (so skye, *prthagjana*) and of *āryas*, he expressly reduces *kun rdzob bden* into *snang tshul*, which means the “modes of apprehensions” of ordinary folks. Also see *brGal lan nyin byed snang ba*, pp. 543–544: nyon mongs can gyi ma rig pa'i dbang gis kun rdzob bden pa 'jog cing de mthong ba rdzun pa dang don dam pa ni mthong ba yang dang par gsungs//

¹²⁸ *bDen gnyis gnas 'jug*, f. 378: 'jig rten pa rnam kyi don dam pa'i bden pa 'jog 'byed ni/ lhan skyes pa'i ma rig pa'i sgri pa'o//; *dBu tsa'i rnam bshad 'jug ngog*, f. 220: kun rdzob bden pa'i mtshan nyid ni/ yul can rdzun pa'i shes byar grub pa'o/ don dam bden pa'i mtshan nyid ni/ tha snyad kyi spros pa ma lus pa 'das pa'i de kho na nyid do//

¹²⁹ *Grub mtha' kun shes*, f. 27: mtshan nyid 'khrul ngor dang rig ngor rnyid//; f. 28: de 'phir kun rdzob nges byed 'khrul shes tsam// Also see its commentary, i.e., the *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, f. 220, for his critique of Tsong khapa's definition of conventional truth which runs, f. 221: kun rdzob kyi bden pa ni gti mug gi ming can 'jig rten ngar 'dzin lhas skyes kyis 'jog la/ dag pa'i yeshes kyis ma gzigs par yang yang gsung pa'i phir ro//; ff. 250–251. In the *bDu ma Chen po* Section (ff. 263–264) in particular, while he focuses on the treatments of the truths, he offers perspective based definitions: bden gnyis kyi mtshan nyid ni/ rim pa bzhin ma phyad 'khrul pa'i shes ngor rnyed pa'i rnyed don dang/ ma 'khrul 'phags pa'i rig ngor rnyed pa'i rnyed don zhes bya ste//

¹³⁰ *dBu tsa'i rnam bshad zab mo*, p. 287: kun rdzob ni chos can snang tshul las rnam par 'jog la/ don dam ni/ de'i gnas tshul stong pa nyid do//; *Rigs tsogs dka' gnad*, f. 6: kun rdzob kyi mtshan nyid ni gnas tshul la ma gzhug pa'i blo rnyed don/ don dam bden pa'i mtshan nyid gnas tshul la zhug pa'i blos myed don te// Also see, f. 7: bden pa gnyis po 'ang yul la chos gnyis yod pa'i dbang gis gzhag pa min gyi/ shes ngo gnyis la ltos nas gzhag pa ste//

¹³¹ *D'ag brgyud grub pa'i shing rta*, f. 275: don dam pa ni 'phags pa yang dag pa gzig pa'i yeshes de ngor yul yang dag par 'jog go shes brjod par zad kyi/ rang gi bdag nyid du grub pa zhig blos rnyed bya yod pa ma yin no// kun rdzob ni so skye ma rig pa'i ling tog gis blo mig ma lus pa kebs pa rnams kyi blo ngor yul brdzun pa mthong pa yis blo'r jog go/ /blo dis mthong ba'i 'dzin stangs dang mthun par yul de ltar grub pa ni ma yin no/ /de na ngos po rnyed do cog thams cad don dam pa dang kun rdzob pa'i ngo bo gnyis ni 'dzin par 'gyur

ro/ /de gnyis las 'phags pa yang dag pa mthong ba'i yul gang yin pa de ni de kho na nyid de don dam bden pa'o/ /mthong pa rdzun pa'i yul gang yin pa de ni kun rdzob bden par ston pas gsungs so// Also see ff. 280–281, 304–306.

¹³² *kLu grub dgongs rgyan*, p. 217: mdor na bden gnyis bya ba de phal ba'i ngor bden pa zhig dang/ phags pa'i ngor bden pa zhig tu ma go bar/ phal pa'i gang bden pa de'i nang du phags pa'i gzigs tshul thams cad bsres pa na/ bsm gyis mi khyab pa'i gnas la yid ches chung zad tsam yong ba'i skal ba med la/ bsm gyis khyab pa'i ngas la ji srid sdo pa de srid du 'jig rten las cung zad kyang ma 'das par shes par bya'o// Also see pp. 220–221, 226, 237–238,

¹³³ "*Samvṛtisatya* is truth so-called; truth as conventionally believed in common parlance... It is the object of the ignorant and immature. *Paramārthasatya* is unsignified by language and belongs to the realm of the unutterable, and is experienced by the wise in a very intimate way". In fact, he argues "there is only one truth—the *paramārthasatya*, as there is only one real—the Absolute. The other—*samvṛtisatya*, is truth so-called in common parlance, it is totally false from the absolute standpoint". See 'Introduction', the *Mādhyamika Dialectic and the Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*, p. xxv.

¹³⁴ "Phenomena viewed as relative, as governed by causes and conditions constitute the world, viewed as free of all conditions are the Absolute. The Absolute is always the uniform nature. Nirvāṇa or the Absolute is not something produced or achieved. Nirvāṇa only means the disappearance of the fabrications of discursive thought... Phenomena are appearances, and appearances points to their reality. The veil gives a hint of that which is veiled". Ultimate truth in his sense is the only truth, "the Absolute as the essence of all being is neither born, nor does it cease to be...it is the reality of the appearances". See 'Introduction', *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, pp.51–52. Also, see pp. 50–52.

¹³⁵ In 'Madhyamaka', (pp.152–153), he avowedly equates conventional dharmas with the daughter of a barren woman; and with the hairs that a monk with diseased eyes thinks he sees in his almsbowl, and argues "the object described, the description, and the person describing are all similarly nonexistent". The Absolute truth, which, as he argues "is, 'knowledge of Buddha, is a 'not-knowledge'", it is like a man without diseased eyes who does not see hairs.

¹³⁶ See his translation of the verse [VI: 23] of the *Madhyamakāvatāra* and compare it to his (see *The Emptiness of Emptiness*, p. 231–232, 38n.) notes on the same verse. He defines ultimate truth as an object of wisdom, which is revealed through accurate perception. He argues that conventional truth is an object which is obtained "on the strength of false perceptions made by common people in whom the eye of intelligence has been completely covered by the cataract of spiritual ignorance. This intrinsic nature is as well not established in itself, but is simply the object revealed through the perception of naïve people".

¹³⁷ In *Mahāyāna Buddhism* (p. 71), he argues that "all entities", as he argues have two natures, because there is a correct perception and a delusory perception. The object of correct perception is reality (*tattva*). That of delusory perception is said to be conventional truth".

¹³⁸ *The Emptiness of Emptiness*, p. 92.

¹³⁹ *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, p. 70.

¹⁴⁰ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, p. 45: gzhan las shes min zhi ba dang/ /spros pa rnams ma spros pa/ /rnam rtog med don tha dad med/ /de ni de nyid mtshan nyid do/ /Also cited in the *Prasannapadā*, p. 306b–307t.

¹⁴¹ *rTsa shes tik chen*, pp. 330–332: gang zag gzhan gis stan pa stam las rtogs par bya ba min gyi rang gis zag pa med pa'i yeshes kyis rtogs par bya ba'o//...gnyis pa zhi ba ni rab rib med pas skra shad ma mthong pa ltar ngo bo nyid kyis yod par rang bzhin dang dral ba'o// de'i phyir don rnams spros par byed pa'i spros pa ngag gis ma spros pa ste ma brjod pa ni gsum

pa'o// rnam rtog med pa ni sems kyi rgyu ba yin la/ de kho na nyid de mngon du gyur pa'i dus su ni de dang dral ba ste//...don tha dad med pa ni chos gcig don dam par ji lta bu yin pa der chos gzhan thams cad kyang mtshungs pas don dam par do so so ba med pa ste//

¹⁴² *lTa ba'i 'od zer*, p. 335b: 'phags pa'i mnyam gzhas so so rang gis rig pa'i yeshes kyi 'ga' yang mthong ba med pa'i tshul gis rig par bya ba yin gyi/ byis pa rnams kyi gzhan sgra dang/ gtan tshigs la sogs pa las ngo bo ji lta ba bzhin shes bar bya a ma yin pa dang/ gzod ma nas cir yang ma grub pas zhi ba dang/ ngag gi spros pa rnams kyi zhen nas brjod par bya ba a yin pas ma spros pa dang/ sems sems byung gyi spyod yul las 'das pas rnam par rtog pas 'gar yang brtag tu med pa dang/ mi 'dra ba'i byi drag med pas don tha dad min pa ste/ chos lnga po de ni don dam pa'i de kho na nyid kyi mtshan nyid do//

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 326a: 'on na dngos po rnams kyi rang bzhin de kho na'i rang bzhin ci lta bu zhig yin zhe na/ rang gi ngo bo ci lta ba bzhin bstan par mi nus mod/ gdul bya rnams kyi rtogs par bya ba'i phyir/ zag pa med pa'i yeshes kyi spyod yul chos rnams kyi de kho na'i rang bzhin dag gi mtshan nyid ni/ ngo bo rgyu rkyen gyis bcos pa min pa dang/ tha snyad rnam 'jog chos gzhan la ltos pa med pa dang/ gzhan du mi 'gyur ba ste/ chos gsum ldan yin la/ de'i mtshan gzhi ni spros dral gyi chos nyid yin te//

¹⁴⁴ *Iti*. 43 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ *Bahuna Sutta* AN X.81 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu). It is cited in *The Mind Like Fire Unbound*, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna*, p. 272.

¹⁴⁷ SN XXXV.116 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu). Cited in *The Mind Like Fire Unbound*, p. 8.

¹⁴⁸ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, p. 45: gang la brten te gang 'byung ba/ /de ni re zhig de nyid min/ /de las gzhan pa'ang ma yin phyir/ /de phyir chad min rtag ma yin/XVIII:10/ Cited in the *Prasannapadā*, p. 310m.

¹⁴⁹ *rTsas she trk chen*, p. 332.

¹⁵⁰ *lTa ba'i 'od zer*, p. 335b.

¹⁵¹ *The Central philosophy of Buddhism*, p. 244.

¹⁵² *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, p. 64: tha snyad la ni ma brten par/ /dam pa'i don ni bstan mi nus/ /dam pa'i don ni ma rtogs par/ /mya ngan 'das pa thob mi 'gyur/XXIV:10/

¹⁵³ *Yuktiṣaṭikā*, p. 86: srid pa dang ni mya ngan 'das/ /gnyis po 'di ni yod ma yin/ /srid pa yongs su shes pa nyid/ /mya ngan 'das zhes bya bar brjod/6/

Notes and Tibetan citations on Chapter III

¹ *Madhyamakavatāra*, p. 156: rab rib mthu yis skra shad la sogs pa'i/ /ngo bo log pa gang zhig rnam brtags pa/ /de nyid bdag nyid gang du mig dag pas/ /mthong de de nyid de bzhin 'dir shes kyi/29/ Cited in the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, p. 104b.

² *dGongs pa rab gsal*, pp. 198–200.

³ *lTa ba ngan sel*, ff. 612–613.

⁴ *lTa ba ngan sel*, ff. 612–613: don dam pa'i bden pa ni 'phags pa'i so sor rang rig pa'i yeshes kyi gnyis snang nub pa'i tshul gyis myang bar bya ba yin gyi/ gnyis snang dang bcas na rnam mkhyen gyi bar gyi yul yang don dam bden pa ma yin pa dang/ don dam bden pa rang gi ngo bo ji lta ba bzhin gdul bya la bstan mi nus kyi/ gdul bya la tha snyad kyi bstan pa na sgra rtog gi yul thams cad rnams grangs pa'i don dam zhes bya pa kun rdzob bden pa yin par bstan no//

⁵ Cited in the Nyanaponika Thera's 'Sāriputta: The Marshal of the Dhamma' in *Great Disciples of the Buddha*, p. 62).

⁶ *lTa ba'i 'od zer*, p. 335b: byes pa rnams kyis gzhan sgra dang/ gtan tshigs la sogs pa las ngo bo ji tla ba bzhin shes par bya ba ma nyin pa dang//

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 335b: ngag gi spros pa rnams kyis zhen nas brjod par bya ba ma nyin pas ma spros pa dang/ sems sems byung gi spyod yul las 'das pas rnam par rtog pas 'gar yang rtag tu med pa dang//

⁸ *lTa ba'i shen 'byed*, p. 127: mdor na gnas lugs la dpyod par byed pa'i blo ni sgra don 'dres 'dzin gyi rtog pa las ma 'das pas/

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 127: mtha' bzhi'i spros pa gang rung du bzhung pas bzhi po cig char du bkag pa mi srid...//

¹⁰ *Recognising reality*, p. 455.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 459.

¹² *'Jug pa'i dka' gnad*, f. 46: don dam pa 'jug 'byed kyi tshad ma la mtshan nyid ni...rjes dpag dang dpe nyer 'jal dang lung tshad ma gsum ni yod pa ma yin te/ tshad ma de gsum gyi 'jug mtshams ni yul de dang de la rtog par song pa'i cha nas 'jog la/ yul gang la rtog par song ba'i cha nas don dam bden pa 'jal byed kyi tshad mar song ba mi srid pa'i phyir/ de bas na mngon sum gcig po'o// Among the four a means of knowledge, *pramāṇas*, his epistemology clearly discounts the inferential knowledge (*rjes dpad*, *anumāna*), analogy (*dpe nyer 'jal*, *upamāna*) and verbal testimony (*lung*, *śabda*) as means of knowing ultimate truth. For him, they are only means of knowing conventional truth, for they are all conceptual. He considers direct perception (*mngon sum*, *pratyakṣa*) alone as the means of knowing ultimate truth. For details, see *'Jug pa'i dka' gnad*, ff.460-465, 466-470, 475.

¹³ His analysis of the epistemic practices within the *Prāsaṅgika* excludes the use of logical inference as a means of knowing ultimate truth. See *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, ff. 273-274: kun rdzob tsam mam bden pa gang yin yang rung nges byed kyi blo ni 'khrul shes tsam du nges te/ 'jig rten pa'i tshad ma'am bdu ma pa'i tshad min yin kyang rung ste gte mug kho na 'jog cing nges par byed pas so// Also see ff. 269-272. He expressly argues that the notion of *pramāṇa* is inappropriate in the *Madhyamaka* tradition. See ff. 222-223: tshad ma bzhi po de 'jig rten gyi 'dod pa bkod pa yin gyi rang lugs bzhag pa ma yin pa'i phir te...dbu ma rang lugs la tshad ma dang tshad min kun rdzob gzhi byas la med par 'dod par bya'o//

¹⁴ *Shes 'grel ke ta ka*, p. 9: chos nyid spros pa thams cad las 'das pa na de ni blos dmigs pa byar med pa yin te/ gang yul dang yul can du ma gyur cing mtshan ma gang du 'ang ma grub pa de la yang dag par ji ltar shes bya zhes rjod de// In commenting on the sixth chapter of Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, Mi pham categorically rules out the possibility of knowing ultimate truth by conceptual mind. This claim is made more obvious in his response (*Shes 'grel ke ta ka*, pp. 9-10) to his critics. Mi pham's claim however, should not be taken too far. For he not only accepts (*Nges shes sgron me*, ff. 82-87, 96) ultimate truth as an object of knowledge by the non-conceptual mind or by direct personal realisation, but also argues that the conceptual-linguistic device offers us 'mere understanding that all conventional realities are utterly false'. See *dBu rtsa'i mchan 'grel*, f. 217: 'jig rten tha snyad kyi rjes su 'drang nas de'i mtshan nyid brjod cig ci na/ rtags dpe sogs bzhan gis bstan pas ji bzhin shes mi nus te rab rib can la de med par bstan pas rab rib med par lta ltar ngo bo ma mthong pa'i tshul kyis rtogs bya ji lta ba rtogs mi nus kyang/ 'de phyin ci log go bya ba tsam gzhi rtog go//

¹⁵ His commentary to Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*dPyod 'jug tshig 'grel*, pp. 438-440) reveals his deep commitment to the concept of ineffability and inconceivability (*smra bsam bjod med*) of ultimate truth. See *dPyod 'jug tshig 'grel*, pp. 440: chos nyid spros pa thams cad las 'das pas na/ ni blos 'dmigs par byar med pas yin te/ gang yul dang yul can du ma gyur cing mtshan ma gang du 'ang ma grub pa yang dag par na ji ltar shes bya shes brjod//

¹⁶ *kLu grub dgongs rgyan*, p. 211: ji srid 'jig rten gyi rigs pa la snying thag pa nas yid ches yod pa de srid du 'jig rten las 'das pa'i do la yid ches yod pa nam yang mi srid de... 'jig rten gyi

rigs pa la yid ches dgos na lam bsgom pa don med par 'gyur ba'i rgyu mtshan du bcom ldan 'das kyis mig dang rna ba sogs nas 'phags pa'i lam bya ba'i dbang po bzhan zhig yod par gsungs...// In this polemic dGe 'dun Chos 'phel unleashes severe criticisms against the philosophy of Tsong khapa. dGe 'dun Chos 'phel renders the reasoning consciousness as utterly useless in terms of understanding ultimate reality. At the heart of his rejection of *pramāṇa* (perception) lies his equation of perception with the conception of true existence. See *kLu grub dgongs rgyan*, pp. 211–213.

¹⁷ "Ordinary beings", he says "by means of following the inferential reasoning consciousness ascertain [ultimate reality]". See *Grub mtha' mdzod*, f. 196: don dam bden pa nges par byed pa'i tshad ma ni dpyad bzod mthar thug dpyod pa'i rig pa'i bzhal bya nges par byed pa'i tshad ma pa thob nas so so rang gi rig pa'i rnam par mi rtog pa'i yeshes kyis rtogs na'ang/ so so skye bo de dag gyis gtan tshigs kyi rjes su 'brang ba'i rigs shes rjes dpag gi nges par byed do//

¹⁸ Logical reasoning, as far as he is concerned, is an indispensable device for the direct realisation of ultimate reality. In sharp contrast with most of his followers such as Go rampa and Śākya mChog ldan, Sa paṇ holds that even the ordinary beings possess the reasoning consciousness that could conceptually access ultimate reality. See *gZung lugs legs bshad*, p. 72b: don dam bden pa'i ngo bo ni/ rigs pa yul dang bcas pa ste/ rigs pa ni sangs rgyas kyi yeshes dang/ byang chub sems dpa' rnam kyis mnyam par bzhas pa'i shes pa dang/ so so skye bo'i gcig dang du dral la sogs pa'i spros pa gcod byed kyi rigs pa yin la/ rig pa'i yul ni rigs pa des gtan las phap pa'am/ des rtogs pa'i chos rnam kyis chos nyid spros pa dang dral ba'o//

¹⁹ By closely following the footsteps of his predecessor, Sa paṇ (*Rigs tsogs dka' gnad*, f. 22), Rong ston also differentiates between the reasoning consciousness analysing conventional truth and the reasoning consciousness analysing ultimate truth. And argues that the "knowledge generated from contemplation and meditation have the same continuum, because the meaning (*don*) established by the means of analytical process, is itself further processed through the meditative equipoise". See *Rigs tsogs dka' gnad*, f. 105: bsam byung dang sgom byung yang rtogs pa'i rigs rgyun gcig ste/ bsam byung gis gtan la phabs pa'i don de nyid la sgom byung gis kyang mnyam par 'jog ba'i phyir ro/ de la bsam byung ni rta'i dkyus bstan pa ltar yin la/ sgom byung ni de las brten nas rta thogs med du rgyug pa bzhin yin no// Rong ston however admits the limits of inference and maintains that it is a mistaken insofar as the inferential cognition mistakes the universal of selflessness as selflessness itself. However inference, he argues, paves the way for the eventual eradication of the conception of self. In the *Rigs tsogs dka' gnad*, f. 105, he says: gal te rjes dpag ni log shes yin pas des rtogs pa'i rigs rgyun goms pas phyin ci ma log pa'i rtogs pa skye ba ji ltar 'gyur zhe na/ bdag med pa'i don spyi la spyi'i bdag med du zhen pa'i cha nas 'khrul pa'i phyir de'i 'dzin stangs kyi cha nas goms par byed pa ma yin las/ 'on kyang yul bdag med du gnas pa ltar rjes dpag kyang bdag med pa'i rnam ba can du skye ba'i 'dzin stangs kyi cha nas phyin cin ma log pa dang rjes su mthun pa'i phyir de'i 'dzin stangs kyi cha nas goms par byas pas bdag 'dzin log nas bdag med mngon du rtogs pa'i rtogs pa skye ba'i phyir nges ba ga las yod// Moreover, Rong ston criticises (*Rigs tsogs dka' gnad*, f. 39: rjes dpag la rigs shes su mi 'dod na rigs pa la rten nas sgro 'dog gcod byed kyi blo min par 'gyur ro//) the view that denies the role of inference as the epistemic means by which ultimate reality can be eventually accessed directly. He equates inference and the reasoning consciousness, and argues that the denial of the epistemic role of inference would be tantamount to denying the analytical cognitions altogether. For him, this would amount to denying the meditative equipoise, which is a direct result of the logical analysis. Therefore, he writes (*Rigs tsogs dka' gnad*, f. 40): spros pa gcod pa'i rjes dpag la yul gyi snang ba mi mnga' bas mnyam bzhas

snang med yin pa'i gnad kyang de yin te/ rigs shes kyī mnyed don de nyid las mnyam par 'jog pa'i phyir zhes 'dod do//

²⁰ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 370a: don dam bden pa 'phags pa'i mnyam gzhaḡ gis ji ltar spros pa dang dral pa'i tshul kyis myong ba ltar mtshan nyid dang mtshan gzhi sogs gang gis kyang bstan par mi nus te/ tshig gis brjod par bya ba ma yin zhing/ blos yul du bya ba ma yin pa'i phyir te//

²¹ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 198: rab rib med pas mthong ba 'dra ba'i skra shad med pa mi rtogs pa gsungs pas/ nyan pa pos de ltar ma rtogs kyang skra shad med pa me rtogs pa min no//

²² *Ibid.*, p. 199: don dam bden pa ni zab mo'i don can gyi nges don gyi lung dang/ de ltar ston pa'i ngag gis brjod me nus pa...min te//

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 198–199: dper byas nas de kno na nyid stan pa na ma rig pa'i rab rib kyī bsad pa dang dral bas mthong ba 'dra ba zhiḡ mi rtogs kyang/ spyir de kho na nyid mi rtogs pa min par bzhed pas na/ don dam bden pa ni zab mo'i don can gyi nges don gyi lung dang/ de ltar ston pa'i ngag gis brtod mi nus pa dang/ de'i rjes su 'brang ba'i blos kyang rtogs mi nus pa min te/ de kho na nyid kyī don shes brjod kyī yul min par gsungs pa thams cad la yang de bzhin du shes par bya'o//

²⁴ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 384d: don dam bden pa'i yul can ma 'khrul pa ni 'phags pa'i mnyam gzhaḡ kho na la byas nas/ de'i ngor mi slu ba don dam bden pa yin no//

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 384d: so so skye bo'i rigs shes kyis rnam par dpyad nas gtan la 'bebs pa yin pa na mtshan nyid 'jog pa'i tshe yul can ma 'khrul ba ni 'phags pa'i mnyam gzhaḡ kho nar rlom yang/ rigs shes tshed ma ni de'i khongs su gtogs pa'o//

²⁶ *Recognising reality*, p. 456.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, p. 45: brjod par bya ba ldog pa ste/ sems kyī spyod yul ldog pas so/ ma skyes pa dang ma 'gags pa/ chos nyid mnya ngan ldas dang mtshungs/ 7/ Also cited in the *Prasannapadā*, p. 299b–300a. See Garfield, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, (p. 249) and Kalupahana, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna*, (p. 268) for other ways of translating this verse.

³⁰ *Prasannapadā*, p. 300t-b: 'dir 'brjod par bya ba 'ga' zhiḡ yod na ni/ de ston par 'gyur ba zhiḡ na/ gang gi tshe brjod par bya ba ldog cing/ tshig dag gi yul yod pa ma yin pa de'i tshe sangs rgyas rnams kyis cung zad kyang ma bstan to/ yang ci'i phyir brjod par bya ba med ce na/ sems kyī spyod yul ldog pas so// zhes gsungs te/ sems kyī spyod yul ni sems kyī spyod yul lo/ spyod yul ni yul te/ dmigs pa zhes bya ba'i tha tshigs go/ /gal te sems kyī spyod yul 'ga' zhiḡ yod par gyur na ni der rgyu mtshan 'ga' zhiḡ sgro btags nas tshig dag 'jug par 'gyur na/ gang gi tshe sems kyī spyod yul nyid mi 'thad pa de'i tshe/ rgyu mtshan sgro btags nas tshig gar 'jug par 'gyur/ yang ci'i phyir sems kyī spyod yul med ce na/ bstan pa'i phyir/ ma skyes pa dang ma 'gag pa/ chos nyid nya ngan 'das dang mtshung// zhes gsungs te/ gang gi phyir ma skyes pa dang ma 'gags pa chos nyid te chos kyī ngo bo dang chos skyi rang bzhin nya ngan las 'das pa dang tshung par bzhaḡ pa de'i phyir de las sems mi 'jug go// sems mi 'jug na rgyu mtshan sgro 'dogs par ga la 'gyur la/ de med pa'i phyir tshig dag 'jug pa ga la 'gyur te/ de'i phyir sangs rgyas rnams kyis cung zad kyang ma bstan to zhes bya bar gnas so//

³¹ *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, p. 104m: de ni brjod du med pa'i phir dang/ shes pa'i yul ma yin pa nyid kyī phir dngos su bstan par mi nus pas/

³² *rTsa she tik chen*, p. 327: don dam par brjod par bya yod na de ston par 'gyur na'ang don dam par brjod par bya ba ldog pa ste yod pa min pa...//

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 327: de'i rgyu mtshan ni don dam par sems kyī spyod yul gyi dmigs pa ldog pas so//

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 327: de'i rgyu mtshan yang chos thams cad don dam par ma skyes shing ma 'gags pa'i chos nyid nya ngan las 'das pa dang mtshungs pa ste//

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 327: de'i tshe sangs rgyas mams kyis cung zad kyang ma bstan no//

³⁶ *Nges don rag gsal*, p. 372d: stong nyid rtogs nas goms pa mthar phyin pa'i tshe glo bur gyi dri ma zad nas blo nyid zag med kyi dbyings su gyur pa ni/ spangs rtogs phun sum tsogs pa don dam pa'i sangs rgyas yin la.../

³⁷ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 728: yeshes de'i ngor ji lta ba dang/ ji snyed pa dang/ yul can yeshes gsum po ngo bo tha dag me snang la.../

³⁸ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 371a–b: 'der spros pa zhes bya ba bden pa'i dngos po'am ma yin dgag kho na ma yin gyi gang la blo 'jug cing 'phro ba dgag sgrub ky chos kyi mtshan ma thams cad yin te...spros pa ni dngos po'i rgyu mtshan can yin la de bzhin gzhigs pa dngos po med pa la/ spros pa mams 'jug pa ga la yod de/ de'i phyir de bzhin gshigs pa spros pa las 'das pa yin no//

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 371a–b: spros pa ni dngos po'i rgyu mtshan can yin la de bzhin gzhigs pa dngos po med pa la/ spros pa mams 'jug pa ga la yod de/ de'i phyir de bzhin gshigs pa spros pa las 'das pa yin no//

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 71a: kun rdzob kyi bden pa ni...ci ltar so so'i skye bo mams kyis dngos po yod pa dang med pa la sogs par brtags pa yin gyi/ de lta bu'i rang bzhin ni med pa yin te/ yod pa dang med pa la sogs pa rigs pas mi thad ba'i phir ro//

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 370b: gal te sems kyi spyod yul 'ga' zhig yod par gyur na ni der rgyu msthan 'ga' zhig sgro btags nas tshig dag 'jug par 'gyur na/ gang gyi tshe sems kyi spyod yul nyid mi 'thad pa de'i tshe rgyu msthan sgro btags nas tshig gar 'jug par 'gyur// Also see *lTa ba'i 'od zer*, p. 335a.

⁴² *lTa ba'i 'od zer*, p. 335a: ci'i phir sems kyi spyod yul ldog ce na chos mams kyi chos nyid de bzhin nyid gdod ma nas ma skyes pa dang/ ma 'gags pas blo bur gyi dri ma dang dral ba'i mnya ngan las 'das pa dang mtshungs pas/ gnyis snang dang bcas pa'i blo la nam pa 'char rgyu med pa'i phyir ro//

⁴³ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 370b: ci'i phyir sems kyi spyod yul med ce na/... gang gi phyir ma skyes pa dang ma 'gag pa'i chos nyid de chos kyi ngo bo dang/ chos kyi rang bzhin mnya ngan las 'das pa dang mthsung par bzhag pa de'i phir de sems mi 'jug go//

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 370b: sems mi 'jug na rgyu mtshan sgro 'dogs par ga la 'gyur la de med pa'i phyir tshig dag 'jug par ga la 'gyur te/ de'i phyir sangs rgyas mams kyis cung zad kyang ma bstan to zhes bya bar gnas so//

⁴⁵ *lTa ba'i 'od zer*, p. 334d–335a: brjod par bya ba'i chos 'ga' zhig yod na ston par 'gyur ba zhig na de kho na nyid la ni sgras zhen nas brjod par bya ba ldog pas 'ga' yang ma bstan to//

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 335b: don dam pa'i de kho na nyid rang gi ngo bo'i sgo nas bstan par mi nus kyang kun rdzob du sgro brtags nas bstan pa ltar mtshan nyid kyang sgro brtag nas bstan dgos//

⁴⁷ See *dBu rtsa'i mchan 'grel*, 217: 'on na rtogs bya'i de kho na nyid ci lta bu zhe na/ de bsam brjod las 'das par bstan zin to/ /'on kyang 'jig rten tha snyad kyi rjes su 'brang nas de'i mtshan nyid brjod...//

⁴⁸ *dBu rtsa'i rnam bshad 'jug ngog*, f. 175: de kho na nyid sgras brjod pa'am rtog pas shes par nus sam zhes na/ sangs rgyas kyis de kho na nyid ston pa'is dbang du mdzad nas yongs bcod du ci yang bstan pa med de/ de kho na nyid ni sgras brjod par bya ba ldog pa ste/ brjod du med pa'i phyir te/ sems kyi man par rtog pa'i spyod yul du dmigs pa ste der 'dzin pa ldog pas so/ /de'i rgyu mtshan ni/ don dam par/ ma skyes pa dang ma 'gags pa'i chos nyid ni mya ngan las 'das pa dang tshung par sgra rtog gi di lta ba bzhin bzhung du med pa'i phir ro//

⁴⁹ Jaideva Singh, in *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, (pp. 15–18) also endorses the the same view (esp. see (p.39). "From the standpoint of the Absolute, *śūnyatā* means *prapañcāir*

aprapañcitam that which is devoid of, completely free of thought-construction, *anānārthām*, that which is devoid of plurality. In other words, (a) in-expressible in human language, (b) that 'is', 'not is', 'both is' and 'not is', 'neither is' nor 'not is'—no thought category or predicate can be applied to it. It is transcendence of thought".

⁵⁰ We should not however take the similarity between Go rampa and his modern counterparts too far. The (non-traditional) reading of Nāgārjuna, in my view, is a consequence of equating Nāgārjuna's ultimate reality with either Kantian absolute or the Upaniṣadic way of defining Brahman as *neti, neti*. For example, Murit (1998) argues (p. 38) "the similarity of the *avyākṛta* to the celebrated antinomies of Kant and the *catuṣkoṭi* of the Mādhyamikas cannot fail to strike us". Moreover, he says (p. 48) "a close parallel...is the Upaniṣadic way of defining as 'neti,' 'neti,' as what cannot be grasped by speech, thought or senses". Similarly, Narain (1985, p. 239) sees Mādhyamikas as Kantians insofar as their share the notion of "innate incapacity of human reason to reach the Absolute". Singh (1989, pp. 48, 72), however focuses on the connections between Brahman and *śvara* of Vedānta with *Dharmadhātu* and *Dharma-kāya* of the Mādhyamika. Stcherbatsky (1989, p.26) also draws the parallels emphasising the transcendental character of *advaita-brahma*, particularly the connection between Buddha's silence on the metaphysical question and Śāṅkara's silence on the issue about the essence of Brahman. I partly agree with the above philosophers that there are certain parallels in the explanatory mode of the Mādhyamika's ultimate reality, the Kantian absolute and *Upaniṣadic Brahman*, specifically, the incapacity of logical mind to grasp them. However, I also partly disagree. Except for the dialectical parallels, there is a minimal point of intersection between the Mādhyamika's ultimate reality (especially of Tsongkhapa's) with either Kantian absolute or Upaniṣadic Brahman.

⁵¹ *Mādhyamika Dialectic and the Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*, p. xi.

⁵² 'The Nature of Mādhyamika,' p. 239.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁵⁴ *Mahā-satipatthāna*, DN 22 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 4.

⁵⁵ *Sabbāsava Sutta*, MN 2 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), pp. 1-2.

⁵⁶ *The Noble Eightfold Path*, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Translated from Pāli by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. See *The Wings to Awakening*, pp. 274-275.

⁵⁸ See *The Discourse Right view*, p.1. AN X.121 (trans. Bhikkhu Nanamoli, ed. And revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Mahā-Cattārisaka*, MN 117 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).

⁶¹ What four? They are physical food as nutriment, gross or subtle; contact as the second; mental volition as the third; and consciousness as the fourth. [*Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta*, MN 9]. (1) Physical food as nutriment (*kābalinkaro ahāro*), literally, food made into a ball) is nutriment that can be swallowed after making it into a ball; this is a term for the nutritive essence which has as its basis boiled rice, junket, etc. (2) Contact as the second nutriment (*phassa dutiyo*): the sixfold contact beginning with eye-contact; (3) mental volition (*manosanetana*); and (4) consciousness (*viññānam*): any kind of consciousness whatsoever.

⁶² Aging and death, birth, being, clinging, craving, feeling, contact, the sixfold base, mentality-materiality, consciousness, formations, and ignorance—taints.

⁶³ See his 'Introductory Notes' on *The Discourse of Right View*, p. 2.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Lam rim chen mo*, p. 789: de ni rtog pa yin yang yeshes dang shin tu rjes su mthun pa'i rgyu yin te.../

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 791: so sor rtog pa'i shes rab kyi dpyad pa sngon du song ba'i mi rtog pa dgos kyi, mi rtog pa tsam gis chog pa ma yin no //

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 789: de lta yin na lam zag bcas las zad med kyi lam 'byung ba yang mi srid pas so so skye bos 'phags pa thob pa med par 'gyur te...//

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 789: de bzhin du sa bon skya bo las myu gu sngon po skye ba dang/ me las du ba skye ba dang/ bud med las skyes pa sogs nmams pa mi 'dra ba'i rgyu 'bras mtha' yas pa zhig snang ngo//

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 789: 'phags pa'i nram par mi rtog pa'i yeshes ni bdag gnyis su 'dzin pa'i yul gis stong pa'i bdag med pa'i don mngon sum du rtogs pa yin la/ de skye ba la da lta nas bdag du 'dzin pa'i yul la so sor dpyad nas de med par rtogs pa'i sgo nas sgom dgos...//

⁷⁰ See *The Discourse on Right View*, p. 3.

⁷¹ *The Noble Eightfold Path*, p. 5.

⁷² Except some of my minor modifications, the sutta is trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

⁷³ *Brahmajāla Sutta (Ten Suttas from Digha Nikāya: Long Discourses of the Buddha, CIHTS)*, pp. 16-69.

⁷⁴ For a detailed treatment of these views, see K. N. Jayatilleka, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1963), p. pp. 23-168.

⁷⁵ Trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

⁷⁶ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, p. 81: gang gis thugs brtse nyer bzung nas/ /lta ba thams cad spang pa'i phyir/ /dam pa'i chos ni ston mdzad pa/ go tam de la phyag 'tshal lo/XXVII:30/

⁷⁷ For his detailed treatment of this issue, see *Legs bshad snying po*, pp. 248-250, 252-254; and *rTsa she tik chen*, pp. 258-259, 462-484.

⁷⁸ *Empty Words*, p. 46.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Yang dag lta ba'i 'od zer*, p. 307a: lta ba smad pa ni ma rig pa'i rab rib kyis blo'is mig myams pa'i blo chung gang dag phyi nang gi dngos po kun rdzob pa nmams las yang dag par yod pa nyid dang/ de bkag pa'i med pa nyid du lta ba'i gang zag de yis ni lta bar bya ba don dam par rang bzhin gis mya ngan las 'das pa spros pa thams cad nyi bar zhi ba dang/ zhi ba mthar mthog pa mi mthong ste/ dgag bya spros pa'i mtha la bltas pas spros dral lta ba'i mig dang mi ldan pa'i phyir/ dmus long bzhin no//

⁸² For a detailed analysis, see *lTa ba'i shen 'byed*, pp. 41-64, 66-76 for his criticisms on Tsongkhapa's view; and pp. 116-154 for his account.

⁸³ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 394d: dbu ma rang nyid la zhe 'dod kyi khas len cung zad kyang med pa'r phyir//

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 395a: rang la zhe 'dod kyi dam bca' khas len med pa de sgrub pa'i rang rgyud gyi rtags shes bya la mi 'thad pa yin no/ /des na thal 'gyur gyi byed pas kyang pha rol po'i log par rtog pa'i dam bca' 'gog pa tsam yin gyi/ rang gi 'dod pa sgrub pa ni ma yin te//...des na dbu ma pa la rang 'dod pa'i bsgrub bya med pas dang/ chos can la mthun snang med pas rang rgyud kyi rtags mi 'thad cing gzhan gyi 'dod pa 'gog pa ni pha rol po nyid kyis khas blangs pa'i rtags las de dang brgyud nas 'gal ba'i pha rol po'i 'dod pa 'gog pa thal 'gyur ba'i lugs 'de nyid rigs pa yin no// Also see, pp. 396a-400a.

⁸⁵ See his 'Introductory Notes' on the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna*, p. 12.

⁸⁶ *Lam rim chen mo*, p. 792: bden par bzung nas gnas su mi rung ba yang sngar bshad pa ltar/ de dag bden par med par rtogs pa la rag las pas/ de 'dra ba'i mi gnas pa dang mi rtog par gsungs pa thams cad yul nmams rang bzhin gis grub pa'am bden par 'gog pa' yang dag pa'i so sor rtog po sngon du 'gro ba kho na la gsungs pa yin par shes par gis shig//

⁸⁷ 'The Nature of Māhyamika,' p. 238.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 238-239.

Notes and Tibetan citations on Chapter IV

¹For example, kLong chen, *Grub mtha' mdzod*, ff. 196, 294; Sa paṇ, *gZung lugs legs bshad*, p. 72b; Red mda' ba, bDu 'jug rnam bshad, p. 325; Mi pham, *Shes 'grel ke ta ka*, p. 10; Rong ston, *Rigs tsogs dka' gnad*, ff. 58–59; sTag tsang, *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, f.255; Śākya mChog ldan, *dBu rtsa'i rnam bshad 'jug ngog*, f. 117; Mi skyod rDo rje, *D'ag brgyud grub pa'i shing rta*, f. 279; and mKhan po Kun bzang dPal dan, *dPyod 'jug tshig 'grel*, p. 440.

²*Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* 104: nyan par 'dod pa rnam la rang gis myong ba nyid du de'i rang bzhin gsal par bya ba'i phir dpe bshad pa//

³*Prasannapadā*, p. 307: 'de la bzhan las shes pa yod pa ma yin pas na gzhan las shes min te/ gzhan gyis bstan pa rtogs par bya ba ma yin gyi/ rang nyid kyis rtog par bya ba yin no zhes bya ba'i don to//

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 307: de'i tshe de kho na nyid ma rtogs pa'i tshul gyis rang nyid kyis rtogs par 'gyur te/ de ltar na dngos po rnam kyis rang gi ngo bo gzhan las shes ba ma yin pa...de ni de kho na nyid do//

⁵*Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, p. 105: gal te rnam pa de lta bu'i rang bzhin ni mthong ba med pa nyid ma yin nam de'i phyr ji ltar de dag gis gzigs she na/ bden mod kyis 'on kyang ma gzigs pa'i tshul gyis gzigs so zhes brjod do//

⁶*The Progress of Insight*, p. 6.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*, see 'The Translator's Note', p. 11, 34n.

⁹*dGongs pa ra gsal*, p. 202: de kho na nyid kyis gzig ngor gnyis snang nub pas gnyis kyis tshul gyis mi gzigs pa ni bden mod kyis/ 'on kyang ma gzigs pa'i tshul gyis de dag gis gzigs so zhes brjod do//

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 200: don dam pa'i shes bya thams cad mkhyen tshul... phung po la sogs pa kun rdzob pa'i snang ba rnam ma gzigs pa'i tshul gyis/ de rnam kyis de kho na nyid mkhyen pa'o//

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 202: sangs rgyas kyis don dam mkhyen pa'i yeshes kyis chos can la ma rig par chos nyid 'ba' zhig thugs su chud par gsungs te//

¹²*Nges don rab gsal*, p. 446: gnyis snang dang bcas ba'i snang ba ni med de/ 'khrul ba'i bags chags ma lus pa spangs pa'i phyr ro//

¹³Cited in the *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 202: mthong ba med pa ni mthong ba dam pa'o// Also cited in the *rTsa she 'tik-chen*, p. 275.

¹⁴*dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 202: ci yang mi mthong ba mthong bar mi bzhed kyis// Also see *rTsa she 'tik chen*, p. 275–276.

¹⁵*dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 202:spros pa ma mthong ba ni spros dral mthong bar 'jog pas/ mthong ma mthong gzhi gcig la byed pa min no// Also see *rTsa she 'tik-chen*, pp. 275–276: mthong ba med pa ni mthong ba dam pa'i zhes gsungs pa'i don yang ci yang mi mthong ba mthong bar mi bzhed kyis/ sngar bshad pa ltar spros pa ma mthong ba ni spros dral mthong par 'jog pas mthong ma mthong gzhi gcig la byed pa min no//

¹⁶*lTa ba'i shan 'byed*, p. 128b: ma mthong ba'i tshul gyis mthong/ ma gzigs pa'i tshul gyis gzigs//

¹⁷*Prapañca* in Buddhist philosophical discourse, always carries a negative connotation. It usually means a tendency of the mind to proliferate issues from the sense of falsified or distorted self. It is therefore frequently used in the analyses of the psychology of conflict as the Buddha himself does in his discourses such as of the *Sakka-pañha Sutta* DN 21, the *Madhupindika Sutta* MN 18, and the *Kalaha-vivāda Sutta* SN IV.11. Although this term is

translated in different ways such as self-reflexive thinking, reification, falsification, distortion, elaboration, or exaggeration, I opted to translate it as 'conceptual elaboration' to emphasize the role of conception in the process of *papañca*. In his introductory notes on the *Madhupindika Sutta* MN 18 (p. 2), Thanissaro Bhikkhu argues that "the word itself is derived from a root that means diffusiveness, spreading, proliferation. The Pali Commentaries define *papañca* as covering three types of thought: craving, conceit and views. They also note that it functions to slow down in its escape from *samsāra*".

¹⁸ See Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 'Introductory Notes' on the *Madhupindika Sutta*, MN 18, p. 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ I borrowed these mapping models from Thanissaro Bhikkhu, see 'Introductory Notes' on the *Madhupindika Sutta*, MN 18, p. 2. Although the mappings of the causal chain leading to *papañca* or vice versa seem somewhat linear in their mapping styles, Buddhist analysis of causality is generally positioned between linearity and non-linearity, between circularity and non-circularity, and between determinism and non-determinism. "It provides plenty of room for feedback loops", as Thanissaro Bhikkhu puts it. But at the same time, it prevents the justification of causal events generated through random, coincidental, accidental, or divine intervention.

²¹ *Madhupindika Sutta* MN 18 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 3.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ See 'Introductory Notes' on the *Madhupindika Sutta*, MN 18

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *rTsa she tik chen*, pp. 322–323: 'o na gang zad pas las nyon zad par 'gyur snyam na/ 'khor bar skye ba'i las nyon ni nyon mongs las skye la nyon mongs kyang sdug mi sdug dang phyin ci log gi tshul min yid byed kyi nram rtog las 'byung gi ngo bo nyid kyis yod pa min no/ / tshul min yid byed kyi nram rtog de dag ni shes pa dang shes bya dang rjod bya dang rjod byed dang bum snam dang skyes pa dang bud med dang/ rnyed ma rnyed la sogs pa la bden par zhen pa'i spros pa sna tshogs pa thog med nas goms pa las skyes'o/ bden 'dzin gyi spros pa ni yul de rnam stong pa nyid du lta ba goms pas 'gags par 'gyur ro// Also see, pp. 327, 453.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 420–421: de la spros pa ni 'jir rtags kyi dgag bya'i spros pa tsam ma yin gyi snang ba'i spros pa yang yin no//

²⁹ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 371a: 'dir spros pa zhes pa bden pa'i dngos po'am ma yin dgag kho na ma yin gyi gang gang la blo 'jug cing sphro dgag sgrub kyi chos kyi mtshan ma thams cad yin te//

³⁰ *Recognising reality*, p. 459.

³¹ *rTsa she tik chen*, p. 421: snang ba'i spros pa med pa med pa la mi bya ste...//

³² *Ibid.*, p. 421: de las 'das pa'i tshul ni de kho na nyid mngon sum du gzigs pa'i ngor gnyis snang gi spros pa thams cad nub pa la bya'i...//

³³ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 371a-b: spros pa ni dngos po'i rgyu mtshan can yin la de bzhin gzhigs pa dngos po med pa la/ spros pa rnam 'jug pa ga la yod de/ de'i phyir de bzhin gshigs pa spros pa las 'das pa yin no//

³⁴ *bDu 'jug rnam bshad*, p. 127.

³⁵ *dBu rtsa'i mchan 'grel*, ff. 209–212.

³⁶ *dBu tsa'i rnam bshad zab mo*, pp. 216–221.

³⁷ *dBu rtsa'i rnam bshad*, ff. 223–224.

³⁸ *D'ag brgyud grub pa'i shing rta*, f. 279.

³⁹ *kLu grub dgongs rgyan*, pp. 149–152.

⁴⁰ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 371b: spros pa'i ngos 'dzin bzhi tsam byung ba rnams ni mtha' bzhi char spros pa las ma 'das kyang skabs thob kyi spros pa ngos 'dzin pa'i dbang du byas pa'o/ de dang dral ba'i don yang 'khrul ngo'i yod med sogs kyi spros pa 'de dag gdod ma nas rang gyi ngo bos stong pa yin la...//

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 371a-b: 'der spros pa zhes bya ba bden pa'i dngos po'am ma yin dgag kho na ma yin gyi gang la blo 'jug cing 'phro ba dgag sgrub ky chos kyi mtshan ma thams cad yin te...spros pa ni dngos po'i rgyu mtshan can yin la de bzhin gzhigs pa dngos po med pa la/ spros pa rnams 'jug pa ga la yod de/ de'i phyir de bzhin gshigs pa spros pa las 'das pa yin no//

⁴² *rTsa she tik chen*, p. 421: gzhan du na chos nyid dang chos can snang ba'i spros pa gnyis ya mi dral bas don dam bden pa mi srid pa'r 'gyur ba'i phyir ro//

⁴³ *Transcendental Dependent Arising*, p. 10, he adds that "with the attainment of dispassion, consciousness passes clear beyond the mundane level, and for a fleeting moment realises as its object the unconditioned state, *nibbāna*".

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, p. 87: srid pa dang ni mya ngan ldas/ /gnyis po 'di ni yod ma nyin/ /srid pa yongs su shes pa nyid/ /mya ngan 'das zhes bya bar brjod/6/

⁴⁶ *rTsa shes tik chen*, pp. 25-26: rten 'byung gi de kho na nyid gnas tshul bzhin 'phags pas gzhigs pa'i don bjord bya rjord byed dang mtshan mtshon la sogs pa'i spros pa thams cad ldog pa'i phyir rten 'byung gi de nyid la spros pa nger zhi zhes bya ba'i//

⁴⁷ *Transcendental Dependent Arising*, p. 10.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Saṃsāra* in this context refers to one's five psychophysical aggregates. It does not refer to the external world.

⁵⁰ *Transcendental Dependent Arising*, p. 10.

⁵¹ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 371c-d: ngos po rnams kyi rang bzhin mthar thug pa...ni de bzhin gshegs pa rnams byung yang rung ma byung yang rung/ chos rnams kyi chos nyid ni gnas pa pa'o// zhes ba'i tshul gyis gsungs las sogs pa'i chos thams cad la dus thams cad du me'i tsha ba dang/ bu ram gyi mngar ba ltar cir yang ma grub pa'i stong nyid des khyab pa dang/ rigs pa yang dag gis mtha' gang du grub tsal ba na gang du yang ma grub par nges pa dang/ de la ji skad shad pa'i rang bzhin gyi chos gsum 'thad pa nyid phyir na dgos po rnams kyi rang bzhin mthar mthug pa'o//

⁵² *rTsa she tik chen*, p. 421: de las 'das pa'i tshul ni de kho na nyid mngon sum du gzhigs pa'i ngor gnyis snang gyi spros pa thams cad nub pa la bya'i...//

⁵³ *Transcendental Dependent Arising*, p. 10.

⁵⁴ *Transcendental Dependent Arising*, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Non-dual wisdom is fully concentrated, fully purified from all epistemic and cognitive errors, and is capable of disintegrating, penetrating and seeing the reality by way of dissolving all psychophysical aggregates into the bodily and mental processes. The experiential 'right view' (or right understanding) is firmly grounded on the bedrock of the eightfold path. The eightfold path empower and reinforce non-dual wisdom's purgative potency and penetrating insight. The conceptual right view directs the mind upon the object of meditation; right speech, right action, right livelihood, eradicate obstructions and create suitable environment. Right effort invigorates the mind; right mindfulness fixes attention on the ultimate reality and right concentration unifies the strength of mind in order to absorb and penetrate the ultimate reality pertaining to one's five psychophysical aggregates.

⁵⁶ *rTa she tik chen*, p. 417: des ji snyed pa'i don mnam mngon sum du 'jal ba ma yin te/ 'jal na ni shugs la rtogs pa mi rung bas dgnos su rtogs dgos shing de yang mnam pa med par 'jal ba 'de pa'i lugs min pas gsugs sgra la sogs pa'i mnam pa dngos su shar ba'i blo la yul yul can gnyis

su snang ba med par byar mi rung ba'i phyir ro//

⁵⁷ Metaphorically speaking, "it is like seeing the continuous successive vanishing of a summer mirage moment by moment; or it is like the quick and continuous bursting of bubbles produced in a heavy shower by thick rain drops falling on a water surface; or it is like the quick, successive extinction of oil-lamps or candles, blown out by the wind, as these lights are being offered at a shrine by devotees". See The Venerable Mahā Sayadaw and Nyanaponika Thera, *The Progress of Insight*, p. 6.

⁵⁸ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 372d: stong nyid rtogs nas goms pa mthar phyin pa'i tshe glo bur gyi dri ma zad nas blo nyid zag med kyi dbyings su gyur pa ni/ spangs rtogs phun sum tshogs pa don dam pa'i sangs rgyas yin la.../

⁵⁹ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 728: yeshes de'i ngor ji lta ba dang/ ji snyed pa dang/ yul can yeshes gsum po ngo bo tha dag me snang la.../

⁶⁰ *lTa ba'i shan 'byed*, p. 128: mtha' bzhi'i spros pa cig char du 'gags nas rtogs bya'i chos nyid dang rtogs byed kyi blo gnyis so sor mi snang//

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 128: blo de nyid spros dral dang dbyer med par mngon du gyur pa'i yul de nyid la/ don dam bden pa zhes pa'i tha snyad btags pa'i yin gyi/ de'i tshe yang don dam bden pa 'di'o zhes cung zad kyang bzung bar bya ba med do//

⁶² *Don dam rnam bshad*, ff. 187: stong nyid mngon sum du rtogs pa'i mnyam bzhag yeshes kyi gzhal bya dngos ni/ yeshes de nyid yin gyi/...

⁶³ *Ibid.*, ff. 187-188: yeshes de chos can/ don dam pa'i bden pa yin te/ stong nyid dngos sum du rtogs pa'i mnyam bzhag yeshes kyi dngos kyi gzhal bya mtshan nyid pa yin pa'i phyir/ rtags grub ste/ yeshes de so sor rang gis rig pa'i yeshes yin pa'i phyir...// The following statement appears in between the above Tibetan citation: stong pa nyid ces bya ba gzhan sel dang ldog pa med dgag gi char gyur ba de nyid de'i dngos kyi gzhal bya ma yin te/ dngos med dgnos su 'jal ba'i mngon sum ni phyogs glang yob sras kyis mi bzhed pa ltar/ zla ba'i zhabs kyis kyang me bzhed pa'i phyir ro//...Śākya mChog ldan denies emptiness from being the object of the transcendental wisdom. "So-called emptiness—which, eliminates other [entities] (*gzhan sel*, *anyāpoha*) and bears the non-affirming negative aspect, is not its actual cognitive sphere. Just as Dignāga and his son [Dharmakīrti] deny the direct perception which, supposedly directly perceives entitleness (*dngos med*), so does Candrakīrti".

⁶⁴ *D'ag brgyud grub pa'i shing rta*, f. 279: 'phags chen rnam kyi mnyam gzhas rnam par mi rtog pa'i yeshes kyis spros pa dang mtshan ma thams cad 'ga' yang mthong ba med pa'i tshul du so so rang gis rig pa'i yeshes kyis gzhihs pa la ni gzugs nas rnam mkhyen gyi bar gyi don dam pa'i bden pa dang/ de bzhin nyid ces tha snyad btags par zad kyi/ 'phags pa'i mnyam gzhas la ma ltos pa'am/ de las tha dad pa'i don du grub ba ni ma yin cing/ don dam pa'i bden pa las tha dad pa'i phags pa'i mnyam gzhas kyang yod pa ma yin no// Only the last two sentences are translated and quoted in the main text.

⁶⁵ *Zla ba'i zhal lung*, f.159-160: mthar ni phyi don med de bags chags kyi snang ba tsam yin par dgnos stobs kyis 'grub ste...// phyi don yod yod lta bur bsgrub pa'i gzhang thams cad re zhig snang ngo'i dbang du byas te yod par bzhag//

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, f.159-160: pa rmi lam rang ngo'i rta glang bzhin no/ /dpyad cing dpyad na nang gi bag chags kyi rten 'byung la thar thug pa ni nang pa sangs rgyas pa'i grub mtha'i phug ste//

⁶⁷ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 728: de nas bzung ste yeshes de'i ngor dus snga phyi dbye ba yang med pa'i phyir te skye 'gag mi snang ba'i phyir ro//

⁶⁸ For Go rampa's detailed treatment of *Ālayavijñāna*, 'the foundational consciousness' and of how he imposes this doctrine on the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka, see *Nges don rab gsal*, pp. 402d-403b. Also see his criticisms direct to Tsong khapa's view for the latter's refusal to impose the conception of the 'foundational consciousness' on the Prāsaṅgika System, see *lTa ba'i shan 'byed*, pp. 91-94. Also see *lTa ba ngan sel*, ff. 634-640.

⁶⁹ *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, p. 47.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² See Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 'Introduction' on the *Mūlapariyaya sutta*, MN 1, p. 1.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Mūlapariyaya Sutta* MN 1 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 2. I chose to retain the original Pāli word *nibbāna* in place of the term "Unbinding".

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁸ *Madhyamakāvatāra*, p. 170:gsugs med na ni sems yod ma 'dzin cig/ /sems yod nyid na'ang gzugs med ma 'dzin cig/vi:91/

⁷⁹ *Nagara Sutta* SN XII.65 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 1.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Nalakalāpiyo Sutta* SN XII.67 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 1

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ See his notes and 'Studies on the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*', *Master of Wisdom*, p. 259.

⁸⁴ See his article 'Dhamma and Non-duality,' p. 2.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 373c-d: spros dral don dam pa'i mtshan gzhir bsnyad pa'i tshul ni de ltar cir yang ma grub pa nyid yin yang ma grub pa nyid gdul byas rtogs pa'i don do mtshan gzhir sgro btags nas bsnyad pa yin gyi.../

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 373d: mtshan nyid bstan pa'i gzhir gyur ba'i mtshan gzhi ni mi srid do//

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 373d:des mtshon pa'i don yang mtshan nyid dang/ mtshon bya dang/ mtshan gzhi gsum du sgro btags pa'i tha snyad gsum gyi sgo nas don dam pa'i bden pa zhes kun rdzob kyi bden pa'i lda bor bsnyad pa yin te...//

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 373b-c: 'on na sngar spros dral ngos gzung ba'i skabs su bjord bya rjod byed dang/ yul yul can dang/ dgag sgrub kyi mtshan ma thams cad dang dral bar brjod nas 'dir de lta bu'i che ba nam mkha' mi tok gi yon tan brjod pa ltar shes par mi nus so zhes na de lta mod kyi 'dir yang de rtog pa'i shes pa dang myong bas yul du byas pa'am 'ga' zhig gi byed rgyur bstan pa ma yin te/...'phags pa'i mi rtog pa'i shes rab kyis spros pa mtha' dag khegs pa nyid las stong nyid rtogs zhes dang/ bden pa mthong zhes bsnyad pa tsam yin gi rtog pa dang myong bas yul du byas na don spyi dang dngos po las ma 'das so//

⁹¹ *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, f. 260: phags pa'i mnyam bzhag yeshes la ni mtshan ma'i gnyis snang lta zhog snang ba'i snang tsam yang med par dbyings so so zhi ba cig dgos te/ rtogs bya dang rtogs byed yul and yul can du snang ba yod na byang chub ni med par phags pa klu sgrub zhabs kyis...gsungs pa'i phyir ro//

⁹² *kLu grub dgongs rgyan*, p. 186: mnyam gzhag gi skabs su ci yang med pa de/ rjes thob kyi snang ba dang 'drel tshe mnyam gzhag gi skabs cir yang med pa dang/ rjes thob tu ci yang snang pa gnyis zung du 'drel ba'i don yin la/

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 186: de ni don dam par cir yang ma grub pa dang/ tha snyad du cir yang grub pa'i don do shes par bya'o//

⁹⁴ *Lam rim chen mo*, pp. 773-783.

⁹⁵ See 'A critique of Quietism,' Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*, pp. 112-117.

⁹⁶ *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, pp.878-889.

⁹⁷ His criticisms (see *Thub pa dgongs gsal*, pp. 24d-25c) are directed towards Hva Shang's view, and are not specifically targeted to Go rampa, but as Go rampa is committed to a similar

view as Hva Shang's, particularly in equating 'seeing nothingness' as 'seeing emptiness' Sa pañ criticism definitely is not misplaced and inappropriate.

⁹⁸ *dBu tsa'i rnam bshad zab mo*, f. 121: gang dag ci yang yid la me byed pa tsam mnyam gzhaq du 'dod par ltar na mnyam gzhaq gis sgrib pa'i bag la nyal ba 'joms par me nus te/ stong nyid rtogs pa'i lhag mthong dang dral ba'i phyir/ 'dus shes med pa'i snyoms 'jug zhin//

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, ff. 121-122: gal te ci yang yed la med byed pa tsam gyis spong ngo zhes na/ gnyid dang brgyal ba la sogs pas kyang spong bar 'gyur te/ yid la mi byed pa tsam 'de la yang yod pa'i phyir ro//

¹⁰⁰ See Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*, p. 400, 31n for his brief analysis of the Chinese monk Hva Shang as a historical and philosophical figure. According to Sa pañ's (see *Thub pa dgongs gsal*, pp. 24d-25c) brief historical account of the origin of Hva Shang's view in Tibet, he argues that this view prevailed during the reign of Tibetan king, Trisong Deutsan. It was a Chinese monk, called Hashang Mahāyāna, who was held responsible for propagating this view in Tibet. Although eventually he was defeated by a great Indian pundita, Kamalaśīlā in the great Samye-debate and was forced to return to China. His infamous doctrine, these days, branded as 'quietism' is an emphasis on stilling thoughts, or speculative analysis in order to attain tranquillity. It is also said that this doctrine dismisses the significance of the observances of ethical principles and the moral sides of the spiritual practices.

¹⁰¹ *Nges shes sgron me*, f. 83: kha cig cir yang mi dzin zher/ cir yang mi dzhin zer ba'i don/...dran med ha shang lugs/ ma dpyad tse ner bzhaq ba yes/ lhag mthong gsal ba'i cha med par/ mtsho gting rdo bzhin tha mal gnas...//

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, f. 84: ma mthong stong par rtogs shes na/ chos tshul shin tu zab pa ste/ sems ni gzugs can ma yin pas/ /sus kyang mdog sogs mthong mi srid/ /ma mthong tsam las stong pa nyid/ /ngo 'phrod snyam na shin tu gol/ /len brgyar rtag kyang mi yi mgor/ /phyugs kyi rwa mthong mi srid/ /de ma mthong bas de stong par/ rtogs su zhes na sus kyang sla//

...

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, f. 87: cir yang mi dzin lta ngan la/ /dngos po cir yang ma grub pa'i/ /nges shes skye ba ga la yod/ des na sgrib pa spong mi nus/ de phyir 'di gnyis khyad par yang/ du ba'i rtags la mi bzhin du/ spang rtogs bog skyed tshul las shes// Also see, ff. 121-128, 74.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 446c: skyes 'gag la sogs pa gdul bya las bstan ba'i ya gyal gyi kun rdzob bden pa'i snang ba med kyang dbyings rig dbyer med kyi don dam pa snang ba'i snang ba yod dgos te gzhan du chos dbyings goms pa mthar mthog pa'i tshe chos dbyings mi snang na/ chos dbying snang ba'i yeshes mthar mthog med par thal ba'i phyir ro//

¹⁰⁵ *An Introduction to Buddhism*, p. 112.

¹⁰⁶ *Catuhśatakaṭikā*, f. 389: rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba ni ji lta ba bzhin mthong ba na sgyu ma byas pa lta bur 'gyur gyi/ mo gsham gyi bu lta bu ni ma yin no/ /gal te rnam par dpyad pa 'dis skye ba rnam pa thams cad du bkag pa las/ 'dus byas skye ba med pa bstan par 'dod na ni de'i tshe de sgyu ma lta bu nyid du mi 'gyur gyi/ mo gsham gyi bu la sogs pa dag gis nye bar gzhal bar 'gyur ba zhig na/ rten cing 'drel bar 'byung ba med pa thal bar 'gyur ba'i 'jigs pas de dag dang bstun par mi byed kyi/ de dang mi 'gal ba sgyu ma la sogs pa dag dang ni byed do// Also cited in the *Lam rim chen mo*, p. 743.

¹⁰⁷ *Catuhśatakaṭikā*, f. 389: rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba ni ji lta ba bzhin mthong ba na sgyu ma byas pa lta bur 'gyur gyi/ mo gsham gyi bu lta bu ni ma yin no/

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 389: / rten cing 'drel bar 'byung ba med pa thal bar 'gyur ba'i 'jigs pas de dag dang bstun par mi byed kyi/ de dang mi 'gal ba sgyu ma la sogs pa dag dang ni byed do//

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 397: di'i phyir de ltar yongs su dpyad pa na/ dngos po rnams kyi rang bzhin 'grub pa mi 'gyur bas so so nas dngos po rnams la sgyu ma lta bu de nyid lhag mar lus par 'gyur ro// Cited in the *Lam rim chen mo*, p. 744.

¹¹⁰ *Lam rim chen mo*, p. 743-744: rigs pa des rnam pa dpyad nas rang bzhin khegs pa'i shul du

ngos po nmams la sgyu ma tsam gyi don nyid yod par 'dzin pa ni nges par skye dgos pas skyon min te//

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 743: rang bzhin yod med 'tshol ba'i rigs shes kyis sgyu ma tsam gyi don yod par gzung na'ang skyon yin gyi...//

¹¹² *rTsa she tik chen*, p. 417: des ji snyed pa ma gzhal na chos can dang chos nyid ya dral du thal bar mi gyur te/ de kho na nyid rtogs pa'i rigs shes kyis ngo na chos can dang chos nyid kyis 'drel pa mi 'jog pa'i phyir dang...//

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 417: sngon po rtogs pa'i tha snyad pa'i tshad ma'i ngo na don dam bden pa med pas de gnyis 'brel mi dgos pa dang 'dra ba'i phyir ro//

¹¹⁴ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 203: don dam pa gzigs pa'i ngor don dam bden pa de/ phung sogs lus kyis dang ngag gi spyod yul dang/ yid kyis yul du 'gyur ba ltar du 'gyur na ni/ de kho na nyid mngon sum du gzigs pa'i ngor spros pa dang ma dral bas don dam bden par mi 'gyur gyi kun rdzob kyis spros par 'gyur ro zhes pa ste/ de ltar byas na ma gzigs pa'i tshul gyis gzigs pa'i shes byed du 'gro'o//

¹¹⁵ *rTsa shes tik chen*, p. 204: de kho na nyid mngon sum du gzigs pa'i yeshes de don dam shes pa dang/ don dam bden pa de'i shes byar 'jog kyang...//

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 204: yeshes de'i ngor bya byed de gnyis dang bral ba mi 'gal ba ni/ bya byed gnyis ni tha snyad pa'i blo kho na'i ngor 'jog pa'i phyir te//

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 204m: bya byed gnyis ni tha snyad pa'i blo kho na'i ngor 'jog pa'i phir...//

¹¹⁸ *Ud I.10* (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu). Cited in his book, *The Mind Like Fire Unbound: An Image in the Early Buddhist Discourses*. (Barr, MA: Dhamma Dana Publication, 1999), p. 10.

¹¹⁹ *rTsa shes tik-chen*, p. 204: dper na rigs shes rjes dpag yul can dang/ don dam bden pa yul du 'jog nus kyang/ yul yul can gyi bya byed gnyis rigs ngor mi 'jog pa bzhin no//

¹²⁰ *Samanupassanā Sutta* SN XXII.47 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).

¹²¹ *Paccaya Sutta* SN XII.20 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).

¹²² Cited in the *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 202-203; also cited in the *rTsa she tik-chen*, p. 276.

¹²³ *rTsa shes tik chen*, p. 417: de kho na nyid mngon sum du rtogs pa'i yeshes kyis ngor ni rang gi yul dang yul can gyi bar na gnyis su snang ba phra mo yang med par chu la chu bzhag pa bzhin du mnyam par zhugs pa yin la... /

Notes and Tibetan citations on Chapter V

¹ *Madhyamakāvatāra*, p. 205: ji ltar snod kyis dbye bas mkha' la dbye ba med de ltar/ / dngos byas dbye ba 'ga' yang de nyid la med de yi phyir/ /ro mnyam nyid du yang dag thugs su chud par mdzad gyur na/ /mkhyen bzang khyed kyis skad cid gis ni shes bya thugs su chud/XI:11/ Cited in the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, p. 333. See Huntington, *The Emptiness of Emptiness*, p. 190, for a slightly different way of translating this verse.

² For Tsong khapa, see *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 455: ji ltar dper na bum pa dang 'khar gzhang la sogs pa'i snod kyis mi 'dra ba'i dbye ba du ma yod kyang/ mi 'dra ba'i dbye ba de yis snod de dag tu gtogs pa ste der khyab pa'i nam mkha' la ni/ sgrib pa thams cad bkab tsam du mtshungs pa'i phyir/ de las gzhan pa'i dbye ba med...// For Go rampa, see *lTa ba's ngan sel*, f. 728: gnyis snang nub pa'i lung ni ji ltar snod kyis dbye ba zhes sogs rtsa 'grel yin la/ gzhan yang shes bya'i yul skye ba med pa la yul can gyi blo yang skye ba med par ldan par gsungs pa nmams kyis stan to//

³ AN VIII.19 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu). Cited in the 'Abstract' of *The Mind Like Fire Unbound*, p. 1.

⁴ *Samādhirañjasūtra* (VII, 5); Toh. no.127, *mDo sde da*, f. 20b: gcig gis thams cad shes gyur zhang/ /gcig gis thams cad mthong bar 'gyur/ /ji snyad mang po brjod byas kyang/ /de la dregs

pa skye mi 'gyur/ /bdag gi 'du shes shes pa ltar/ de bzhin kun la blo sbyor bya/ chos kun de yi rang bzhin te/ /rnam par dag pa nam mkha' ngo bo yin// Cited in Candrakīrti, *Catuhśatakaṭikā*, f. 218; rGyal tshab rJe (Ruth Sonam and Geshe Sonam Rinchen, *The Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattva*, pp. 194, 356-16n); and also mKhas grub rJe (Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*, p. 166). Cabezón also offers slightly different way of translating this passage.

⁵ *Ibid.*, (contd): bdag gi 'du shes shes pa ltar/ de bzhin kun la blo sbyor bya/ chos kun de yi rang bzhin te/ /rnam par dag pa nam mkha' ngo bo yin//

⁶ See TP, 815, Vol.33,16.3.2. This citation is taken from Candrakīrti, *Catuhśatakaṭikā*, f. 218; gang gis chos gcig sgom nas chos rnam kun/ /sgyu ma smig rgyu 'dra zhing gzung med la/ /gsob brdzun ther zug min par shes pa de/ /ring por mi thogs byang chub snying por 'gro// Ruth Sonam, *The Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattva* (p. 356) points out that *Gaganagañjaparipṛcchāsūtra* ('phag pa nam mkha'i mdzob kyiis zhus pa'i mdo). See mKhas grub rJe (Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness*, p. 166); rGyal tshab rJe (Ruth Sonam and Geshe Sonam Rinchen, *The Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattva*, pp. 194, 356-17n).

⁷ *Catuhśataka*, p. 268: dngos po gcig gi lta po gang/ /de ni kun gyi ta por bshad/ /gcig gi stong nyid gang yin pa/ /de ni kun gyi stong pa nyid/VIII:191/ Also cited in the *Catuhśatakaṭikā*, f. 217.

⁸ *Catuhśatakaṭikā*, ff. 217-218:gsugs kyi rang bzhin stong nyid gang yin pa de nyid tshor ba la sogs pa phong po rnams kyi rang bzhin stong pa nyid do/ /de bzhin du mig gi skye mched gyi rang bzhin stong pa nyid gang yin pa de nyid skye mched bcu gnyis char gyi yang yin no/ /de bzhin du mig gi khams kyi rang bzhin stong pa nyid gang yin pa de nyid khams bco brgyad char gyi yang yin no/ /de bzhin du dngos po dang yul dang dus dang rten gyi dbye bas tha dad cing rab tu dbye ba mtha' yas pa rnams las dngos pa gcig gi rang bzhin stong pa nyid gang yin pa de nyid dngos po thams cad kyi rang bzhin stong pa nyid do/ /bum pa dang 'khar bzhong la sogs pa tha dad kyang nam mkha' tha dad med pa bzhin no/ /gzugs la sogs pa'i dngos po tha dad kyang gzugs la sogs pa rnams kyi rang bzhin ma skyes pa la tha dad pa med pa'i phyir chos gcig kho na'i rang zhin gyis ma skyes pa yongs su shes na chos thams cad kyi rang bzhin gyis ma shes pa yongs su shes par 'gyur te//

⁹ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 455: gzungs dang tshor ba la sogs pa la dngos po ste rang gi rgyu rkyen gyis byas pa'i dbye ba mi 'dra ba du ma yod kyang/ de dag tu gtogs pa de rang bzhin gyis grub pa'i skye ba med pa'i de kho na nyid dngos po byas pa'i dbye ba 'ga' yang med pa de'i phyir de kho na nyid ni ro mnyam pa ste ro gcig kho nar shes par bya'o//

¹⁰ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna*, p. 272.

¹¹ In the *Cūḷa-vīyūha Sutta*, Sn IV.12, the Buddha states: "The truth is one, there no second about which a person who knows it would argue with one knows. Contemplatives promote their various personal truths, that is why they do not say one thing and the same. But why do they say various truths, those how say they are skilled? Have they learned various truths or do they follow conjecture? Apart from their perception there are not many various constant truths in the world. Preconceiving conjecture with regard to views, they speak of a pair: true and false".

¹² *rTen 'brel stod pa*, p. 38:kyod kyiis ji snyad bka' stsal pa/ /rten 'brel nyid las btsams te 'jug/ /de yang mya ngan 'da' phyir te/ /zhi gyur min mdzad kyod la med/38/

¹³ *Ibid.*, 37:ston pa'i nang na rten 'grel ston pa dang/ /shes rab nang na rten 'brel shes pa gnyis/ /'jig rten dag na rgyal ba'i dbang po bzhin/ /phul byung legs par khyod mkhyen gzhan gyis min/37/

¹⁴ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 381c:rang gi ngo bo nam mkha' ltar ro gcig pas rigs mi 'dra bas dbye ba med//

¹⁵ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 455: ro mnyam de yang mkhyen yang mkhyen pa'i skad cig gcig kho nas yang dag par thugs su chud par mdzad par gyur pas na/ mkhyen pa bzang po can

khyod kyis skad gcig gis ni shes bya thams cad thugs su chud pa'i yeshes brnyes so// Also see Candrakirti, *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, p. 333: de yang mkhyen pa'i skad cig gcig kho nas thugs su chud pas bcom ldan ldas kyis mkhyen pa'i skad cid gcig kho nas thams cad mkhyen pa'i yeshes brnyes so//

¹⁶ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 728: skad gcig ma gcig la yeshes skad cig ma gcig gis chos thams cad chos kyis dbyings su ro gcig par rtogs pa'i tshe yeshes de'i ngor ji lta ba dang/ ji snyed pa dang/ yul can yes hes gsum po ngo bo that dad du me snang la//

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 728: de'i rjes su mnyam bzhag de las langs pa yang mi srid de/ thugs mnyam par ma gzhaq pa mi mnga' ba sangs rgyas kyis mthun mong ma yin pa'i yon tan du gsungs pa'i phyir dang//

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 728: de nas bzung ste yeshes de'i ngor dus snga phyi'i dbye ba yang med pa'i phyir ste skye 'gag me snang ba'i phyir ro//

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 727: 'phags pa 'od ma gsum gyi mnyam rjes kyis yul rtogs tshul ma shes na sangs rgyas kyis yeshes kyis shes bya rtogs tshul gyi rnam gzhaq khyad par du phyags pa mi shes pas thog mar de bshad na.../

²⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 727: 'on kyang bden par 'dzin par ni mi 'gyur te/ bden pa'i skyi med mngon sum du rtogs pa'i phyir ro//

²¹ See Go rampa, *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 727 and Tsong khapa, *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 459.

²² *Dvāyatānupassāna Sutta*, Sn III.12 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu). I, however, opted to retain the word *dukkha* instead of "stress," p. 1.

²³ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 727: de'i rjes la thob pa'i yeshes la ni chos can ji snyed pa skye 'gag dang bcas par snang ste/ gnyis snang gi bag chags ma spangs pas so//

²⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 727: mnyam bzhag tu skye 'gag tsam yang mi snang bas ji ta ba rtogs.../

²⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 727: rtogs pa gnyis res 'jog tu 'byung ba ni chos thams cad kyis dbyings su ro gcig tu rtogs pa'i rtogs pa mthar mthog pa'i gnad kyis so//

²⁶ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 458: sangs rgyas ma thob bar du blo gcig gis skad cig ma gcig la chos can so sor snang ba dang/ chos nyid gnyis ka dngos su mkhyen pa mi 'ong bas.../

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 458: (contd) de gnyis mkhyen pa res 'jog tu 'ong ngo//

²⁸ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 728.

²⁹ Nāgārjuna, *Mūmadhyamakārikā* [XXIV:8] and Candrakirti, *Madhyamakāvatāra* [VI:24].

³⁰ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 446b: zhes pa'i skabs nas bstan pa'i kun rdzob bden pa ni med de/ yul can mthong ba brdzun pa med pa/ de'i yul med pa'i phyir ro//

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 446c: skye 'gag la sogs pa gdul bya la bstan pa'i ya gyal gyi kun rdzob bden pa'i snang ba med kyang dbyings rig dbyer med kyis don dam pa snang ba's snang ba yod dgos ste.../

³² *Ibid.*, p. 447c:mdor na rtas ba shes rab kyis mchod brjod kyis skabs kyis skye 'gag las sogs pa brgyad dang/ rab byed nyi shu rtas bdun gyis dpyad par bya ba'i rkyen nas lta ba'i bar nyi shu rtas bdun dang/ des mtshon nas kun rdzob tha snyad kyis rnam bzhag thams cad spros pa yin pas de dag sangs rgyas kyis sar chos kyis dbyings su ro gcig par yeshes skad cig ma gcig gis mngon du gyur ba'i tshe spros pa de dag mi snang yang de dag rtogs zhes pa'i tha snyad ni mi 'gal te...//

³³ *Madhyamakāvatāśyaṭikā*, p. 74c: ci ltar rab rib can la snang ba'i skra shad la sogs pa'i de kho na nyid mig dag pas mthong pa yin las de bzhin du 'jig rten pa la snang ba'i kun rdzob kyis bden pa de spyang dag pas sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyis bdag nyid gang gis gzigs pa de kho na nyid yin no zhes pa'i don to// Also see pp. 75a-c, 161b-167a.

³⁴ *bDu 'jug rnam bshad*, p. 127: snang ba med pa'i spyod yul can gyi sangs rgyas bcom ldan das rnams la ni thams cad du snang ba ma yin te/ chos thams cad rnam par thams cad du spros pa'i mtshan ma nyi bar zhi ba'i chos kyis dbying kyis ngo bor mngon par rdzogs par

byang chub pa'i phyir/ sems dang sems byung las byung ba'i rgyu ba gtan log par 'dod par yin no//

³⁵ *dBu 'jug rnam bshad*, f. 335: ji srid rab rib ma bsal ba de srid skra shad kyi snang ba mi ldog pa de bzhin du/ ji srid ma rig pa'i bag chags ma spangs pa de srid du kun rdzob kyi snang ba char la/ rab rib bsal na skra shad kyi snang ba ldog pa de bzhin du/ ma rig pa'i bag chags spangs pa'i sang rgyas kyi gzigs ngor kun rdzob sna tshogs kyi snang ba 'de mi char bar bzhed pa yin no// Also see ff. 328-336; '*Jug pa'i dka' gnad*, ff. 475-476; and *Don dam rnam bshad*, ff. 1185-188.

³⁶ *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, f. 306: sangs rgyas kyi gzugs sku dang 'phrin las bsam yas brjod kyis mi lang ba rnam/...rtog pa med par ma zad/ sems bskyed pa tsam mi dgos par sngon gyi smon lam dang 'dul bya'i las bzang po'i dbang gis gdul bya de dang de'i gzhan snang gi rnam rol kho na yin par bzhed de//

³⁷ *D'ag brgyud grub pa'i shing rta*, f. 318: sangs rgyas rnam la ni kun rdzob pa'i chos thams cad rnam pa thams cad du snang ba ma yin te/ chos thams cad rnam pa thams cad du mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa'i phyir sems sems las byung ba'i rgyu ba gtan log pa yin no// Also see, ff. 320, 324,

³⁸ *Dam chos dogs sel*, pp. 606: skal ba du mar goms pa'i stobs kyis nyam bzhag ji brten ji rten dang kun rdzob 'khrul ba'i snang ba ji chung ji chung du song nas/ mthar rgyun mtha'i rdor ji gis gnyis snang 'khrul ba'i bag chags phra mo'ang ldog par gyur pa na/ chos kyi dbyings las slar ldang pa med par gnyis snang nub pa'i mnyam bzhag kho na de gnas pa'i tshe sangs rgyas su 'grub pa yin te//

³⁹ *kLu grub dgongs rgyan*, p. 144: 'on kyang da ltar rang res gang mthong ba'i s rdo ri drag 'de dag sangs rgyas tshe da dung yang phra lam mer mthong rgyu yod snyam na shin tu nor// Also see, pp. 147, 182, 191.

⁴⁰ *Gzhung gsum gsal byed*, p. 121: ji srid sgrib pa'i lhag ma yod pa de srid du/ rjest thob pas snang ba'i sna tshogs 'de dag sgyu ma lta bu la sogs par snang la/ nam bag chags thams cad yongs su dag pa na rnam pa thams cad du kun rdzob kyi chos snang ma myong ba rang bzhin nyid la dus thams cad du mnyam par 'jog pa yin no//

⁴¹ For Go rampa's detailed treatment of *Ālayavijñāna*, the 'foundational consciousness' and how he imposes this conception on the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka, see *Nges don rab gsal*, pp. 402d-403b. For his criticisms direct to Tsong khapa for the latter's refusal to impose the conception of the 'foundational consciousness' on the Prāsaṅgika System, see *lTa ba'i shan 'byed*, pp. 91-94. Also see *lTa ba ngan sel*, ff. 634-640.

⁴² Go rampa treats the *Ālayavijñāna* just like any other empirical truths. 'All empirical truths are provisionally explained as vehicles to understand ultimate truth, so is *Ālayavijñāna*', says Go rampa, *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 632-639.

⁴³ *lTa ba nga self*, f. 637: dbu ma thal 'gyur bas tha snyad du kun bzhi khas len dgos te/ sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das kyis mdo las gsungs shing/ de yang don dam bden pa rtogs pa'i thabs su gyur pa'i tha snyad bden pa yin par slo dpon 'di nyid kyis gsungs pa'i phyir te//

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 635: tshogs drug las ngo bo tha dad yod pa ma yin gyi rnam par shes pa gsal tsam gyi ngo bo sems can nas sangs rgyas kyi sa'i bar du rgyun ma chad par yod pa 'de ni...kun gzhir 'jog//

⁴⁵ *lTa ba'i 'od zer*, p. 322c: skye 'gag mi snang bas/ 'dus byas dang mi rtag pa sogs med cing//

⁴⁶ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 447a: 'dus byas thams cad skad cig ma yin pas skye 'gag dang bcas par 'dod pa gnyis ka'ang mi 'thad de...//

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 447a-b: 'dus byas yin na 'rdzun pa bslu ba'i chos can yin dgos pa'i phyir dang/ skye 'gag snang na rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba skye med kyi don du ma rgyur ba'i...phyir//

⁴⁸ *kLu grub dgongs rgyan*, p. 191: ji srid kun rdzob kyi snang ba ma 'gag pa de srid dang/ ji srid rnams kyi rten ma brje bar de srid du stong pa nyid mngon sum du rtogs kyang/ sngar gang khas blang ba de dbang med du khas len dgos//

⁴⁹ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 730: mi rtag pa dang/ 'dus byas dang/ brdzun pa dang/ bslu ba rnams don gcig par gsungs shing/ 'di 'phags pa 'og ma'i lam bden la yod cing/ sangs rgyas kyi yeshes la med pa cig dgos pa las//

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 730: don dam par de dag med pa 'phags pa 'og ma'i lam bden la yang yod pa'i phyir ro//

⁵¹ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 372d: stong nyid stogs nas goms pa mthar phyin pa'i tshe glo bur gyi dri ma zad nas blo nyid zag med kyi dbyings su gyur pa ni spang stogs phun sum tshogs pa don dam pa'i sangs rgyas yin la//

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 446d: rdo rje lta bu'i ting ne 'dzin gis shes bya skye 'gag/ rtag chad la sogs pa'i bud shing bsrigs nas spros pa mtha' dag zhi ba'i chos dbyings dang/ sngar gyi rig pa'i rgyun de'ang skye 'gag la sogs pa'i spros a mtha' dag zhi nas de gnyis dbyer med du gyur pa la yeshes su 'jog pa'i phyir ro//

⁵³ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 446d: sems sems 'byung ni kham gsum pa'i rnam pa can gyi gnyis snang dang bcas pa dang/ don gyi ngo bo dang khyad par mthong pa'i khyad par yod pa dang/ don gyi khyad par la'ang mi 'dra ba du ma mthong ba'i sgo nas gzhang par gsungs la//

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 446d-447a: 'dir shes bya skye 'gag la sogs pa'i spros pa mtha' dag dang dral ba'i shes pa dang dbyer med pa mngon du gyur pa'i tshe gnyis snang dang 'dzin stangs mi 'dra ba'i khyad par cung zad kyang med pa'i phyir ro//

⁵⁵ *lTa ba ngan sel*, ff. 612-613: gnyis snang dang bcas na rnam mkhyen gyi bar gyi yul yang don dam bden pa ma yin.../

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 729: gal te de dag don dam par skye 'gag med pa'i don yin gyi tha snyad du ma yin no snyam na de ni ma nyin te/ tha snyad ni gdul bya'i ngor khas blangs pa tsam yin gyi sangs rgyas rangs snang la don dam pa dang tha snyad gnyis su dbyer med pa'i phyir//

⁵⁷ *kLu grub dgongs rgyan*, p. 192: sgyu ma mkhan gyis sgyu ma'i glang po sprul ba na/ ltad mo mkhan rnams kyis kyang glang po dngos su mthong/ sgyu ma mkhan gyis kyang glang po min pa zhig glang po dngos su mthong ba'i ched du sgyu ma stong pa yin pas/ ltad mo ba rnams kyis sgyu ma mkhan las 'de glang po dngos yin nam zhes dris tshe yin zhes brjod dgos pa de sgyu ma mkhan gyis glang chin gzhan ngor khas len pa yin//

⁵⁸ *lTa ba ngan sel*, f. 734: gzhan ngor ni don dam par skye ba dang tha snyad du skye ba gnyis ka yod do/ ma skye bar bshad pa rnams ni rang ngor te rang ngo rnams ni tha snyad dang don dam gang du yang skye ba med do//

⁵⁹ *lTa ba'i 'od zer*, p. 322c: sangs rgyas rang snang la...skye 'gag mi snang bas/ 'dus byas dang mi rtag pa sogs med cing/ gdul bya'i gzhan ngor ni dgi ba sky dang 'jig pas na...sky 'gag yod kyang//

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 322c: (contd) des sangs rgyas kyi yeshes la skye 'gag yod par mi grub ste/ gdul bya'i sems la snang tshul yin pa'i phir ro//

⁶¹ *Nges don rab gsal*, p. 447b: gdul bya'i ngor skye 'gag tu snang ba ni gzhan snang yin gi rang snang ma yin te//

⁶² *Dam chos dogs sel*, p. 607: rnam par mi rtog pa'i yeshes chos sku de'i byin rlab las/ gzhan ngor rtsol ba med par sku gnyis su 'char zhing/ phrin las kyi 'jug pa nam mkha'i ji srid du 'jug pa yin no//

⁶³ *Grub mtha'i rnam bshad*, f. 306: sangs rgyas kyi gzugs sku dang 'phrin las bsam yas brjod kyis mi lang ba rnams/...rtog pa med par ma zad/ sems bskyed pa tsam mi dgos par sngon gyi smon lam dang 'dul bya'i las bzang po'i dbang gis gdul bya de dang de'i gzhan snang gi mnam rol kho na yin par bzhed de// Also see ff. 206, 273, 305.

⁶⁴ *D'ag brgyud grub pa'i shing rta*, ff. 141-142: tha snyad pa'i skye ba zhes bya ba de bzhin gshegs pas ma gzigs shing 'phags pa 'og ma rnams kyi mnyam bzhag gi gzigs don tha snyad du'ang yod pa ma yin la/ rigs pas dpyad na yang tha snyad du yod pa ma yin cing/...gzhan ngor tha snyad pa'i skye ba rnam par bzhag tshe...gzhan ngor khas len par byed...//

⁶⁵ *Rigs tsogs dka' gnad*, f. 127: gal te gdul ba'i rgyud kyi bsdus pa yin no zhes na/ de dag tshogs gnyis yongs su rdzogs par mthar mthog pa 'thob par 'gyur te/ sangs rgyas kyi sku dang yeshes thams cad rang rgyud la rdzog par thob pa'i phyir//

⁶⁶ *Lam rim chen mo*, p. 742: de la snang ba yod par rigs shes kyi mi grub la/ rang bzhin gyis stongs par tha snyad pa'i tshad mas mi 'grub pas rang bzhin yod med 'tshol ba'i rigs pa'i shes pa dang gzugs sogs yod par 'dzin pa'i tha snyad pa'i blo gnyis dgos pa'i rgyu mtshan ni de yin no//

⁶⁷ *dGongs pa rag gsal*, p. 201: 'khrul pa'i bag chags ma lus pa spangs pa na yeshe skad cig ma ri ri'i steng du yang yeshes gnyis ngo bo gcig tu skye ba rgyun mi 'chad pa...//

⁶⁸ Unlike most of non-dGe lugs pa scholars, meaning attributed to *rjes thob* by Tsong khapa is radically different. For others *rjes thob* means 'aftermath' of *mnyam gzhaq*, which is in fact translated as 'post meditative equipoise'. For Tsong khapa, *rjes thob*, means 'subsequent attainment'. It does not mean aftermath of the meditative equipoise—in the sense of a later, in the sequence of time; rather it means an attainment due to the power of meditative equipoise, or what is being generated from it". See *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 459: rjes la thob pa zhes pa'i rjes kyi don ni/ mnyam gzhaq las langs pa'i rjes zhes dus snga phyi'i rjes min gyi mnyam gzhaq de'i stobs kyi thob pa'am byung ba'i don no// This is an important distinction for Tsong khapa. For it allows him to argue that knowledge of both *rjes thob* and *mnyam gzhaq* of an enlightened being have an equal status. Whereas Go rampa and his counterparts argue that *mnyam bzhag* of enlightened being is superior to their *rjes thob*. *rjes thob* for them, therefore means aftermath of *mnyam gzhaq* in this sense. This allows them to defend their view that *mnyam gzhaq* is superior to *rjes thob*.

⁶⁹ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 458: bden 'dzin gyi bag chags ma lus pa zad de sangs rgyas pa nas dus rtag tu don dam bden pa mngon sum du rtogs pa'i mnyam gzhaq las bzhugs pas/ de las bzhangs pa'i mnyam rjes res 'jog med pa'i phyir//

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 458-459: mnyam gzhaq yeshes de las ngo bo tha dad pa'i ji snyad pa mkhyen pa'i rjes thob kyi yeshes med pa'i phyir na/ yeshes gcig gis bden pa gnyis kyi shes bya thams cad mkhyen par 'dod dgos so//

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 201: (contd) dus gcig tu shes bya mngon gsum du 'jal mi 'jal gyi res 'jog mi dgos so//

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 461: de bzhin du je lta ba mkhyen pa'i yeshes kyi rnyed cing yul de la je lta ba mkhyen pa'i yeshes su song ba dang/ je snyed pa mkhyen pa'i yeshes kyi rnyed cing yul de la je rnyed pa mkhyen par song ba'i sgo nas/ yul so so la ltos nas kun rdzob dang don dam mkhyen tshul yang shes par bya'o//

⁷³ Cited from Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga*, p. 809 (Trans. from the Pāli by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 808.

⁷⁶ *dGongs pa rab gsal*, p. 201: yeshes gnyis ngo bo gcig yin kyang yul gnyis la ltos ba'i mkhyen tshul mi 'dra ba gnyis 'ong ba la 'gal ba cung zad kyang med pa ni/ sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das nyag gcig kyi khyad chos su 'dug pala...//

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 458-459: mnyam gzhaq gi yeshes de las ngo bo tha dad pa'i je snyed pa mkhyen pa'i rjes thob kyi yeshes med pa'i phir na/ yeshes gcig gis bden pa gnyis kyi shes bya thams cad mkhyen par 'dod dgos so/ gang gi tshe chos nyid la ltos te ji lta ba mkhyen pa'i yeshe su song ba de'i tshe blo de'i ngor gnyis su snang ba thams cad nye bar zhe bas yi shes de chu la

chu bzhag pa bzhin du ro gcig tu zhugs pa yin la/ gang gi tshe cho can la ltos te ji snyad pa mkhen par song ba de'i tshe/ yul yul can can so sor snang ba'i gnyis snang yod kyang/ gnyis snang 'khrul pa'i bag chags drung phung pas snang yul la ma 'khrul pa'i gnyis snang yin gi 'khrul pa'i gnyis snang min te//

⁷⁸ *Lam rim chen mo*, p. 742: rigs pa'i shes pas chos can snang ba la skye 'gag sogs kyi rang bzhin rnam pa bcad pa tsam gyi stong pa la nam mkha la bu'i stong nyid//

⁷⁹ Trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. Cited in *The Mind Like Fire Unbound*, Part Two: Chapter 1, p. 8.

⁸⁰ See *Rohitassa Sutta*, AN IV.45 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 1.

⁸¹ Cited in *The Mind like Fire Unbound*, Part Two: Chapter 1 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).p.7.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Upāsiva-māṇava-pucchā*, Sn V6 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p.1.

⁸⁴ *Lam rim chen mo*, p. 742: de nas rang bzhin gyis stong yang rang bzhin du snang ba'i gzugs sogs kyi snang ba 'char ba la sgyu ma lta bu'i stong nyid ces sngon gyi mkhas pa rnam gsungs so//

⁸⁵ For a detail analysis on this subject see mKhan zur Pad ma rGyal tshan, *Zab don mig 'byed*, pp. 353-360. In particular note the following statement (p. 357):gang gi tshe chos nyid la ltos te ji lta ba mkhyen pa'i yeshes su song ba de'i tshe blo de'i ngor gnyis su snang ba thams cad nye bar zhi bas yeshes de chu la chu bzhag ba bzhin du ro gcig tu zhugs pa yin la/ /gang gi tshe chos can la ltos te ji snyad pa mkhyen par song pa de'i tshe/ /yul can so sor snang ba'i gnyis snang yod kyang/ gnyis snang 'khrul ba'i bag chags drungs phyung bas snang yul las ma 'khrul ba'i snyis snang yin gyi/ /'khrul pa'i gnyis snang med te 'de...//

⁸⁶ *Paccaya Sutta*, SN XII.20 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 2.

⁸⁷ *Lam rim chen mo* (contd from the note 84), p. 743: de'i gnad shes na mnyam gzhang tu nam mkha' lta bu'i stong nyid sgoms pas de'i stobs kyis rjes thob tu sgyu ma lta bu'i stong nyid 'char ba'i tshul rnam legs pa shes par 'gyur ro//

⁸⁸ For a detailed analysis on this issue see rGyal tshab rJe, *bDen gnyis rnam gzhang*, pp. 138-140; mKhan zur Pad ma rGyal tshan, *Zab don mig 'byed*, pp. 357-368; 'byams dbyang bZhad pa, *Grub mtha' rnam bshad*, pp. 896-899 and mKhas grub rJe (see Cabezon, *A Dose of Emptiness*), pp. 380-386.

⁸⁹ *rTsa she tik chen*, p. 420: ji lta ba dang ji snyed pa mkhyen pa'i yeshes kyang ngo bo tha mi dad pas sangs rgyas kyi yeshes gcig gis kyang shes bya kun la kyab par bshad pa dang yang mi 'gsal te//

⁹⁰ *Parivatta Sutta*, SN XXII.56 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 1.

⁹¹ *Parivatta Sutta*, SN XXII.56 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 1.

⁹² Cited from Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga*, p. 809.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ In the *Parivatta Sutta*, SN XXII.56 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu, p. 1), the Buddha says:

"What is form? The four great existents [the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind properly] and the form derived from them: this is called form. From the origination of nutriment comes the origination of form. From the cessation of nutriment comes the cessation of form".

⁹⁵ *Parivatta Sutta*, SN XXII.56 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 1.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Upanisa Sutta*, SN XII.23 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 1.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Rohitassa Sutta*, AN IV.45 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ For detail enumerations of the seven-sets of the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment see the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions in the *Dharmasaṃgrahaḥ* of Ācārya Nāgājuna, pp. 23-27. For a detailed exposition of the Pāli version, see Mahāthera Ledi Sayadaw, *The Manuals of Dhamma*, pp. 152-198; and Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *The Wings to Awakening*, pp. 58-187.

¹⁰¹ In the *Ariyapariyesanā Sutta* MN XVI, the Buddha tells us that he learned the eight absorptions (Pāli *jhānas*) from Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, so it is clear that the meditative absorptions are pre-Buddhist practices known to the Hindu faith.

¹⁰² See below a comprehensive version of the Buddha's declaration recorded by U Na in 'Three Fundamental Concepts': "Monks! There are four *Satipaṭṭhānas*. The path which is constituted by these four *Satipaṭṭhānas*, is the only path that will lead beings to purity of mind. This is the only path that will lead beings to liberation from tribulation and grief. This is the only path that will lead beings to extinction of bodily and mental suffering. This is the only path that will lead beings to achievement of *maggas*. This is the only path that will lead beings to the realisation of *nibbāna*". See U Na, *The Ten Sutta from Digha Nikāya*, pp. 468-469.

¹⁰³ *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, DN 16. Some modification are made in the translation of Sister Vajira & Francis Story.

¹⁰⁴ The sDe dGe Nyingma Edition, book no. 12, vol. Ka, 144b: Śāri bu rigs kyi bu'am rigs kyi bu mo gang la la shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa zob mo'i spyad pa spyod par 'dod pa des 'de ltar rnam par lta bar bya ste/ phung po nga po de dag kyang/ rang bzhin gyis stong par rnam par yang dag par rjes su lta'o/ gzugs stong pa'o/ /stong pa nyid gzugs so/ /stong pa nyid las kyang bzugs gzhan ma nyin no/ de bzhin du tshor ba dang/ 'du shes dang/ 'du byed dang/ rnam par shes pa rnam stong pa'o/ Śāri bu de ltar chos thams cad stong pa nyid de/ mtshan nyid med pa/ ma skyes pa/ ma 'gags pa/ dri ma med pa/ dri ma dang dral ba bri ba med gang ba med pa'o/...Śāri bu/ byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen pos de ltar shes kyi pha rol tu phyin pa zab mo la bsalab par bya'o// I have borrowed the translation of this passage from Lopez, *Elaborations of Emptiness*, p. vii.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 144b: (contd) legs so legs so/ rigs kyi bu/ de de bzhin no/ rigs kyi bu de de bzhin te/ ji ltar kyod kyis bstan pa bzhin du shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa zab mo la spyad pa bya ste/ de bzhin gshegs pa rnam kyang rjes su yid rang ngo/ /

¹⁰⁶ For a detail list and their description, see Jones, *The Mahāvastu* vol. I, pp. 134-140.

¹⁰⁷ For a detail list, see Tsepak Rigzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary*, pp. 221-222.

¹⁰⁸ For a detail list see *Ibid.*, pp. 165-166.

¹⁰⁹ See Jones, *Mahāvastu* vol. I, the section on 'Attributes of the Buddhas', pp. 126-127; Nāgājuna, *Dharmasaṃgrahaḥ*, pp.41-42; and Candrakīrti, *Madhyamakāvatāra*, pp. 209-210.

¹¹⁰ See Jones, *The Mahāvastu* vol. I, the section on 'Attributes of the Buddhas', pp. 127-128. Also see Nāgājuna, *Dharmasaṃgrahaḥ*, pp. 43-44.

¹¹¹ For a detail exposition on the ten Bodhisattva Bhūmis see Huntington, *The Emptiness of Emptiness*, pp. 149-196.

¹¹² *Brahmajāla sutta*, DN 1 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu). Cited in his article: 'No-self or Not-self?' p. 6.

¹¹³ *Mūlapariyāya Sutta*, MN. 1 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 4.

¹¹⁴ *Yamaka Sutta*, SN XXII.85 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 2.

¹¹⁵ *Anurādha Sutta*, SN XXII.86 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 2.

¹¹⁶ *Aggi-Vacchaotta Sutta*, MN 72 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 2.

¹¹⁷ *Great Disciples of the Buddha*, p. 267.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Mahā-Nidāna Sutta*, DN 15 (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu), p. 1.

¹²³ *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, p. 276.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, p. 55: phung min phung po las gzhan min/ /de la phung med de der med/ /de bzhin gshegs pa phung ldan min/ de bzhin gshegs pa gang zhig yin /xxii:1/

¹²⁶ *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, p. 279.

¹²⁷ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, p. 57: rang bzhin gis ni stong de la/ /sangs rgyas mnya ngan 'das nas ni/ /yod do zhes 'am med do zhes/ /bsam pa 'thad pa nyid med 'gyur /xxii:14/

Notes on Conclusion

¹ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna*, p. 366.

² *Madhyamakakārika*, p.167: tha snyad bden pa thabs su 'gyur ba dang/ /don dam bden pa thabs byung 'gyur pa ste/.../8/

³ *Buddhism and Society*, p. 68.

⁴ *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*, p. 107.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁸ Translated by Horner. Cited in Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*, p. 92.

⁹ *Dhamma and Non-duality*, p. 3.

¹⁰ *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, p. 165. Curiously, Sogyal Rinpoche seems to be suggesting that even buddhas—the greatest yogis suffer from mental agonies. It is a commonly accepted fact that even a fully enlightened being is subjected to physical discomforts. Throughout Pāli *suttas* we encounter occasions when the Buddha sustained a back ache [AN IV. 358-359], fell ill with intestinal wind [AN I.174], and had his foot pierced by a stone splinter [SN I. 27], etc., and in each instance there was accompanying physical pain. But never was there an emotional reaction or psychological discomfort resulting from the pain. It is indeed very odd to claim that they suffer from mental agonies. Mental agonies, according to Buddhist psychology, arise due to mental defilements. Not only are buddhas, but also *āryas*, and arahats totally free from defilements. Buddhas especially have eradicated even the predisposition or remnants of defilement. This is one of the fundamentals of Buddhist psychology. So by claiming that buddhas experience sorrow and joy, Sogyal Rinpoche inadvertently suggests that buddhas are deluded beings. Surely such a view has no justification whatsoever. It fundamentally undermines the basic principles pertaining to Buddhist psychology, ethics, and soteriology. Compare Sogyal Rinpoche's claim with the following discourses of the Buddha: "Disenchantment, monks, also has supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for disenchantment? 'The knowledge and vision of things as they really are should be the reply'" [*Upanisa Sutta*, SN XII.23]. The Buddha further clarifies this: "The destruction of the cankers, monks, is for one who knows and sees, I say, not for one who does not know and does not see. Knowing, seeing what does the destruction of the cankers occur? 'Such is material, such is the arising of material form, such is the passing away of material form. Such is feeling...perception...mental formations...consciousness; such is the arising of consciousness, such is the passing away of consciousness'—for one who knows and sees this, monks, the destruction of the cankers occurs" [*Upanisa Sutta*, SN XII.23].

¹¹ *Dhamma and Non-duality*, p. 3.

¹² *In Hope of Nibbāna*, p. 67.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*, p. 113.

¹⁵ Cited in Keown's *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*, p. 113.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, p.113.

²³ *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta in the Ten Suttas from Dīgha Nikāya*, p. 253.

²⁴ *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*, p. 115.

Tibetan	Sanskrit	English
'dus byas	saṃskṛta	conditioned or contingent phenomena
'jig rten	loka	world, mundane
'jig rten grags pa	loka prasiddha	worldly consensus
'jig rten gyi tha snyad	lokavyavahāra	worldly conventions
'jig rten las 'das pa	lokottara	transworldly, transcendental
'jig rten las 'das pa'i yeshes	lokottara jñāna	transcendental wisdom
'jig rten ma yin pa	alaukika	unworldly
'jig rten pa	laukika, lokataḥ	worldly being
'jig tshog la lta ba	satkāya dṛṣṭi	view of substantial 'I' and 'Mine' principle
b den grub	satya siddhi	truly existent, substantially existent
bags chags	vāsnā	predisposition, latency
bcos ma	kṛtrima	conditioned, fabricated
chos can	dharmin	objects, characterised object
chos nyid	dharmatā	reality, true nature, things as they are
don dam bden pa	paramārthasatya	ultimate truth
drang don	neyārtha	provisional meaning
ji lta ba	yathā	as it is, as they are
ji snyed pa	yāvat, yaḥkāścana	all aspects of phenomenal

'jig rten kun rdzob/ yang	loka saṁvṛti/	world
dag kun rdzob	tathya saṁvṛti	worldly conventionality/
'jig rten ma yin pa'i kun	aloka saṁvṛti/	true conventionality
rdzob/ log pa'i kun	mithya saṁvṛti	unworldly
rdzob		conventionality/
		false conventionality
'jig rten pa'i shes pa	luakika jñāna	worldly consciousness
kun nas nyon mongs pa'i	sāmkleśikā dharmāḥ	afflictive dharmas
chos		
kun rdzob bden pa	saṁvṛtisatya	truth-for-concealer/
		conventional truth
log pa'i kun rdzob	mithya saṁvṛti	false conventional
ma rig pa	avidyā	ignorance
mnyam gzhag yeshes	samāhita jñāna	wisdom of meditative
		equipoise
nges don	nitārtha	definitive- meaning
nmyam gzhag	samāhita	meditative equipoise
nyon mongs can gyi ma	kleśāvaraṇa	deluded ignorance
rig pa		
nyon mongs can ma yin	jñāvaraṇa	non-deluded ignorance
pa'i ma rig pa		
rang bzhin/ rang gi ngo	svabhāva	essence, characteristic,
bo		nature
rang gzhin/ gtso bo	prakṛti/ pradhāna	nature/ principal
rjes thob	prṣṭha labdha	subsequent attainment,
		post-meditative state
rjes thob yeshes	prṣṭhalabdha jñāna	subsequently attained
		wisdom, the wisdom of

sgro brtags pa	samāropa,	post-meditative equipoise superimposition, fabrication, reification
shes bya	jñeya	knowable, object of knowledge
ngo bo gcig	eka svābhava	'single ontological identity'
tha snyad bden pa	vyāvahārikasatya	empirical truth/ empirical reality
ldog pa tha dad	vyāvṛtti	'different conceptual identities'
yang dag kun rdzob yul	tathya saṁvṛti viśaya	true conventionality object
yul can	viśayin	subject
rang gi mtshan nyid	svalakṣaṇa	self-defining characteristic
rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa	svalakṣaṇa siddhi	established through self- defining characteristic
rang gi mtshan yid kyi yod pa	svalakṣaṇa bhāva	existence by way of self- defining characteristic
kun rdzob tsam	saṁvṛtimātram	mere conventionality
byis pa, so skye	bāla, pṛthagjana	childish, ordinary being
rdzun pa mthong ba	—	perceivers of falsity
zhen yul	adhyavaśāya	conceived object: a referent object of the conception of self etc.
snang yul/rtog pa'i snang yul	pratibhāsa viśya	appearing object: appearing object of thought
brtags pa	vijñapti	project, fabricate, impute,

phung po lnga	pañca skandhāḥ	reify five psychophysical aggregates
kham s bco brgyad, dbang po drug	aṣṭadaṣṭa dhātu ṣaḍ indriyāṇ	eighteen cognitive spheres six sense powers
skye mched bcu gnyis,	dvādaṣṭa āyatanāni	twelve sources of perception
ji lta ba mkhyen pa'i — yeshes		wisdom realising reality as it is
ji snyed pa mkhyen pa'i — yeshes		wisdom realising empirical phenomenal as they are
don dam mkhyen pa'i — yeshes		wisdom realising ultimate truth, knowledge of ultimate truth
kun rdzob mkhyen pa'i — yeshes		wisdom realising conventional phenomena, knowledge of conventional phenomena
spros pa	prapañca (pāli) papañca	conceptual elaboration; verbal elaboration
spros bral	aprapañca (pāli) apapañca	free from verbal elaboration, free from conceptual elaborations
rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba	pratityasamutpāda	dependent arising
so so skye bo	prthagjana	ordinary beings
gnyis snang 'phrul ba'i — bags chags		subtle predisposition of misconception of dualistic

		appearance
de bzhin nyid	tathatā, thatātva, tattva	reality, as it is
brjod du med pa	avyākṛta, avācyate, avaktavyatva	ineffable, inexpressible
rjes dpag	anumāna	inferential knowledge
mngon sum	pratyakṣa	perceptual knowledge, direct knowledge, direct awareness
lung/ sgra	śabda, śruti, āptavacana	valid verbal testimony
dpe nyer 'jal	upamāna	analogy, paradigm
chos dbyings	dharmadhātu	sphere of ultimate reality
rtog med	nirvikalpa	non-conceptual
rtog bcas	vikalpa	conceptual
thos byung shes rab	śrutamayiprajñā	wisdom arisen from hearing
bsam byung shes rab	cintamayiprajñā	wisdom arisen from conceptual analysis
sgom byung gyi shes rab	bhāvanāmayiprajñā	wisdom arisen from
	(pāli) paṭivedha	meditational practices
gnyis snang	dvayābhata/ ubhayābhāsa	dualistic appearance
lhag mthong	vipaśyanā, (pāli) vipassanā	penetrating insight, special insight
'dus shes med pa'i	asaṃjñatāsamāpatti	non-discerning
snyoms 'jug		meditative absorption
rten cing 'brel bar byung	pratityasamutpanna-	dependently arisen
ba'i chos	dharma	phenomena

I have strictly avoided translating any Tibetan names into English. I seriously believe that the translation of Tibetan names into English is a bizarre practice which often creates more confusion. The same name is translated differently by different interpreters, and consequently one Tibetan name ends up having several English versions. Throughout my thesis, I have retained the original Tibetan names although I employed their abbreviated forms. The following list contains most of the names of the Tibetan texts appearing in the dissertation and they appear in 'Wylie' transliterated forms.

Abbreviated forms	Full forms
'Jug pa'i dka' gnad	Śākya mChog ldan, dBu ma 'jug pa'i dka' ba'i gnad nam par bshad pa ku mud phren mrdzes
bDag med sgrub rigs	Śākya mChog ldan, Theg pa chen po dbu ma nam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las bdag med sgrub rigs le'u brgyad pa
bDen gnyis gnas 'jug	Śākya mChog ldan, bDen pa gyis kyi gnas la 'jug pa nges don bdud rtsi'i thigs pa
bDen gnyis nam gzhaḡ	Śākya mChog ldan, Theg pa chen po dbu ma nam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las bden pa gnyis kyi nam bzhaḡ le'u bzhi pa
bDen gnyis nam gzhaḡ	rGyal tshab rJe, bden gnyis kyi nam gzhaḡ dang lta ba'i 'khrid yig rin po che'i phrin pa

bDu 'jug rnam bshad	Red mda ba, bDu ma 'jug pa'i rnam bshad de kno na nyid gsal ba'i sgron ma
bKa' gdams bces btus	Potowa, Legs par bshad pa bka' gdams rin po che'i gsungs gi gces btus nor bu'i bang mdzod.
brGal lan nyin byed snang ba	Mi pham, brGal lan nyin byed snang ba
bShes spring 'grel ba	Red mda ba, bShes pa'i spring yig gi 'grel pa don gsal
bZhi rgya'i 'grel ba	Red mda ba, bDu ma bzhi brya ba'i 'grel pa
D'ag brgyud grub pa'i shing rta	Mi skyod rDo rje, dbu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad dpal ldan lus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhal lung d'ag rgyud grub pa'i shing rta
Dam chos dogs sel	Mi pham, rDo grub pa dam chos zhes pas gzhan gyi zer sgros bsduś nas mkhas su re ba'i 'khyar ngag de dag mi mkhas mtshang phud du kho rang nas skul ba bzhin nyams mtshar du bkod pa
dBu 'jug rnam bshad	Śākya mChog ldan, dBu ma 'jug pa'i rnam bshad nges don gnad kyi tīkā
dBu ma'i 'byung tshul	Śākya mChog ldan, dBu ma'i byung tshul rnam par bshad pa'i gtam yid bzhin lhun po
dBu ma'i phan yon	Śākya mChog ldan, Theg pa chen po dbu ma rnam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las 'bras bu sku gnyis zung 'jug le'u bcu gcig pa dang dbu ma'i phan yon bstan pa'i le'u bcu gnyis pa

dBu rtsa'i 'grel ba	Maja byang chub rTson 'grus, dBu ma rtsa ba shes rab kyi 'grel ba 'thad pa'i rgyan
dBu rtsa'i mchan 'grel	Mipham, dBu ma rtsa ba'i mchan 'grel gnas lugs rab gsal
dBu rtsa'i rnam bshad	Śākya mChog ldan, dBu ma rtsa ba'i rnam bshad skal bzang 'jug ngogs
dBu tsa'i rnam bshad	Rong ston, dBu ma tsa ba'i rnam bshad zab mo'i di kho na nyid snang ba
dDu ma'i lta khrid	Rong ston, dDu ma'i lta khrid kyi bsdus don snying po'e gsal byed.
dGongs pa rab gsal	Tsong khapa, bDu ma dgongs pa rab gsal
dKa' gnas brgyad bshad	Tsong khapa, rTsa ba shes rab kyi dka' gnas chen po brgyad kyi bshad pa
Don dam rnam bshad	Śākya mChog ldan, Theg pa chen po dbu ma mam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las don dam rnam bshad le'u drug pa
dPyod 'jug tshig 'grel	Kun bzang dPal dan, Byang chub sems pa'i dpyod pa la 'jug pa'i tshig 'grel 'jam dbyangs bla ma'i zhal lung bdud tsi'i thig pa
Drang nges	dGe shes Yeshe Thabs mkhas, Shar Tsongkhapa's drang ba dand nges pa'i don mam par 'byed pa'i bstan bcos legs bshad snying po
Gang zag bdag med	Śākya mChog ldan, Theg pa chen po dbu ma mam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs

	rgya mtsho las gang zag bdag med le'u bdun pa
Grub mtha' kun shes	sTag tsang, Grub mtha' kun shes nas mtha' bral sgrub pa zhes bya ba'i bstan cos
Grub mtha' mdzes rgyan	lCang skya, Grub mtha' thub stan lhun po'i mdzes rgyan
Grub mtha' mdzod	kLong chen, Grub mtha' rin chen mrdzod
Grub mtha'i rnam bshad	sTag tsang Lotsā ba, Grub mtha' kun shes nas mtha' bral sgrub pa zhes bya ba'i stan cos rnam par bshad pa legs bshad rgya mtsho
Grub mtha'i rnam bshad	'Jamyang bZhad pa, Grub mtha'i rnam bshad kun bzang zhing gi nyima
gZung gsum gsal byed	Kun mkhyen Padkar, dBu ma'i gzung gsum gsal bar byed pa nges don grub pa'i shing rta
gZung lugs legs bshad	Sa paṇ, gZhung lugs legs par bshad pa'i bstan bcos
kLu grub dgongs rgyan	dGe 'dun Chos 'phel , dBu ma'i zab gnad snying por dril ba'i legs bshad klu sgrub dgongs rgyan
Kun rdzob bden pa'i rnam bshad	Śākya mChog ldan, Theg pa chen po dbu ma rnam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las kun rdzob bden pa'i rnam bshad le'u lnga pa
Lam rim chen mo	Tsong khapa, Byang chub lam gyi rim pa chen mo.

Las thabs shes bzung 'jub	Śākya mChog ldan, Theg pa chen po dbu ma rnam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las thabs shes bzung 'jub le'u bcu pa
Legs bshad snying po	Tsong khapa, Drang ba dang nges pa'i don rnam par 'byed pa'i bstan bcos legs bshad snying po
lTa ba'i 'od zer	Go rampa, dBu ma rtsa ba'i shes rab kyi rnam pa bshad pa yang dag lta ba'i 'od zer
lTa ba'i gnas	Śākya mChog ldan, Theg pa chen po dbu ma rnam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las lta ba'i gnas le'u dgu pa
lTa ba'i shan 'byed	Go rampa, lTa ba'i shen 'byed theg mchog gnad gyi zla zer
Nges don rab gsal	Go rampa, dBu ma spyi don nges don rab gsal
Nges shes sgron me	Mi pham, Nges shes rin po che' sgron me
Prasannapadā	Candrakīrti, Mūlamadhyamakavṛttiprasannapadā
Rigs lam rab gsal	Mi pham, gZhan gyis brtsad pa'i lan mdor bsdus pa rigs lam rab gsal de nyid snang byed
Rigs tsogs dka' gnad	Rong ston, dBu ma rigs pa'i tsogs kyi dka' ba'i gnad stan pa rigs lam kun gsal
rTen 'brel stod pa	Tsong khapa, rTen 'brel stod pa legs bshad snying po

rTs shes tik chen	Tsong khapa, rTsa shes tik chen rigs pa'i mgrya mtso.
sDom gsum rab dbye	Sa paṇ, sGom gsum rab tu dbye ba'i stan bcos
sGom rim 'khrul spong	Śākya mChog ldan, dBu ma chen po'i sgom rim 'khrul spong dbyangs kyi rnga sgra
Shes 'grel ke ta ka	Mi pham, Shes rab le'ui 'grel pa ke ta ka
Shes rab ral gri	Mi pham, Don rnam par nges pa shes rab ral gri
Shes rab snying po'i rnam bshad	Rong ston, Shes rab sying po'i rnam bshad yum don rab gsal
sPros bral bshad pa	Śākya mChog ldan, Zab mo spros bral gyi bshad pa stong nyid bdud rtsi'i lam po che
sPyod 'jug 'grel bzhad,	Thub bstan Chos grags, sPyod 'jug gi 'grel bshad rgyal sras yon tan bum bzang
Stong thun chen mo	mKhas grub rJe, dBu ma'i stong thun skal bzang mig 'byed
sTong thun chung ba	Śākya mChog ldan , sTong thun chung ba dbang po'i rdu rje blo gsal mgu byed
Thub pa dgongs gsal	Sa paṇ, Thub pa'i dgongs pa rab tu gsal ba
Zab don mig 'byed	mKhensur Padma rGyal tshan, Zab don gdams pa'i mig 'byed gser gyi thu ma
Zla ba'i zhal lung	Mi pham, dBu ma 'jug pa'i 'grel pa zla ba'i zhal lung dri med shel phreng.

Tibetan Tripitaka

- sDe dGe Nyingma Edition *The Nyingma Edition of the sDe dGe bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur*. 1981 (ed.). USA: Dharma Publishing.
- sDe dGe Pajor Edition *sDe dGe Edition of bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur*. n.d. (ed.). The Tasmanian University Collection, Dharamsala: Paljor Press.
- Toh: *A Complete Catalogue of Tohoku University Collection of Tibetan Works on Buddhism*. 1934 and 1953 (ed.). Sendai, Japan: Prof. Yensho Kanakura.
- Tokyo-Kyoto Edition *Tibetan Tripiṭaka*. 1959 (ed.). Tokyo-Kyoto: Tibetan Tripiṭaka Research Foundation.

Pāli Tipitak

- AN Aṅguttara Nikāya (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).
- Dhp Dhammapada: *A practical Guide to Right Living*. (trans). Ācharya Budharakkhita (Bangalore: Mahā Bodhi Soceity, 1886).
- DN Dīgha Nikāya (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu)
- Iti Itivuttaka (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).
- Khp Khuddhaka Nikāya (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).
- MN Majjhima Nikāya (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).
- Ps Paṭisambhidāmagga

SN	Samyutta Nikāya (trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu).
Sn	<i>Sutta Nipata</i> (trans. by Thanissaro Bikkhu).
Thag	Theragatha
Thig	Therigatha
Ud	Udana (trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu).

Other abbreviations

n.d.	no date
CIHTS	Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies.

Indian Sources

- Śāntideva. (ed.). 1993. *Bodhicāryāvatāra*. In the *rGyal tsap's Spyod 'jug rnam bshad rgyal sras 'jug ngogs*. Sarnath: Gelukpa Students' Welfare Committee.
- Atiśa. (ed.). 1993. *Bodhipathadipamṇijika* (*byang chub lam gyi sgron me'i dkha' 'grel*). Dharamsala: Tibetan Government in exile.
- . (ed.). 1993. *'Drom ston rgyal ba'i byung gnas kyi kyes rabs bka' gdams bu chos*. Ziling: mTsho ngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang.
- Candrakīrti. (ed.). 1993. *Mūlamadhyamakavṛttiprasannapadā*. Rajpur: Sakya College.
- . (ed.). n.d. *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, *dBu ma*, vol. *ya pa*, 2a-60f of sDe dGe Pajor Edition of the bStan 'gur, The Tasmanian University Collection. Dharamsala: Paljor Press Edition.
- . (ed.). 1994. *Madhyamakavatārabhāṣya*. Varanasi: Sakya Student Welfare Committee.
- . (ed.). 1996. *Catuhśatakatikā*. Varanasi: Kargyud Students' Welfare Committee.
- . (ed.). 1996. *Madhyamakavatāra*. In the *rTsa ba phyogs bsdus*. Varanasi: Sakya Student Welfare Committee.
- . (ed.). n.d. *Śūnyatāsaptativṛtti*, *dBu ma* vol. *ya pa*, 533a-672g of sDe dGe Pajor Edition of the bStan 'gur, The Tasmanian University Collection. Dharamsala: Paljor Press Edition.
- Āryadeva. (ed.). 1996. *Catuhśataka*. In the *rTsa ba phyogs bsdus*. Varanasi: Sakya Students' Welfare Committee.
- Jayānanda. (ed.). 1978. *Madhyamakāvatārasyaṭikā*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo.

- Nāgājuna. (ed.) 1988. *Dharmasaṃgrahaḥ*. In the 'Phags pa klu grub kyis mdzad pa'i chos yang dag par bsdus pa (trans. and edited) by Ācārya Gyaltsen Namdol. Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetan Series-xv. Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies.
- . (ed.). 1996. *Śūnyatāsaptati*. In the rTsa ba phyogs bsdus. Varanasi: Sakya Students' Welfare Committee.
- . (ed.). 1991. *Bodhicittavivaraṇa*. In *Bodhicitta-Vivaraṇa of Ācārya Nāgārjuna and Bodhicitta-Bhāvanā of Ācārya Kamalaśīka* (trans. and edited) by Ācārya Gyaltsen Namdol. Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetan Series-xxii. Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies.
- . (ed.). 1996. *Mūlamadhyamakakārika*. In the rTsa ba phyogs bsdus. Varanasi: Sakya Students' Welfare Committee.
- . (ed.). 1996. *Vigrahavyāvartanī*. In the rTsa ba phyogs bsdus. Varanasi: Sakya Students' Welfare Committee.
- . (ed.). 1996. *Yuktiṣaṣṭika*. In the rTsa ba phyogs bsdus. Varanasi: Sakya Students' Welfare Committee.

Tibetan Sources

- Śākya mChog ldan. (ed.). 1975. *bDen pa gyis kyi gnas la 'jug pa nges don bdud rtsi'i thigs pa*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 5. Thimpu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- . (ed.). 1975. *dBu ma 'jug pa'i dka' ba'i gnad rnam par bshad pa ku mud phren mrdzes*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 5. Thimpu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- . (ed.). 1975. *dBu ma 'jug pa'i rnam bshad nges don gnad kyi ṭikā*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 5. Thimpu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.

- . (ed.). 1975. *dBu ma chen po'i sgom rim 'khrul spong dbyangs kyi rnga sgra*, in *The Complete Works*, vol. 5. Thimpu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- . (ed.). 1975. *dBu ma rtsa ba'i rnam bshad skal bzang 'jug ngogs*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 5. Thimpu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- . (ed.). 1975. *dBu ma'i byung tshul rnam par bshad pa'i gtam yid bzhin lhun po*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 5. Thimpu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- . (ed.). 1975. *sTong thun chung ba dbang po'i rdu rje blo gsal mgu byed*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 5. Thimpu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- . (ed.). 1975. *Zab mo spros bral gyi bshad pa stong nyid bdud rtsi'i lam po che*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 5. Thimpu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- . (ed.) 1975. *Theg pa chen po dbu ma rnam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las bden pa gnyis kyi rnam bzhag le'u bzhi pa*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 15. Thimphu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- . (ed.) 1975. *Theg pa chen po dbu ma rnam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las kun rdzob bden pa'i rnam bshad le'u lnga pa*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 15. Thimphu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- . (ed.). 1975. *Theg pa chen po dbu ma rnam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las don dam rnam bshad le'u drug pa*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 15. Thimphu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- . (ed.). 1975. *Theg pa chen po dbu ma rnam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las gang zag bdag med le'u bdun pa*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 15. Thimphu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- . (ed.). 1975. *Theg pa chen po dbu ma rnam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las bdag med sgrub rigs le'u brgyad pa*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 15. Thimphu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.

- . (ed.). 1975. *Theg pa chen po dbu ma rnam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las lta ba'i gnas le'u dgu pa*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 15. Thimphu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- . (ed.). 1975. *Theg pa chen po dbu ma rnam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las thabs shes bzung 'jug le'u bcu pa*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 15. Thimphu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- . (ed.). 1975. *Theg pa chen po dbu ma rnam par nges pa'i bang mdzod lung rigs rgya mtsho las 'bras bu sku gnyis zung 'jug le'u bcu gcig pa dang dbu ma'i phan yon bstan pa'i le'u bcu gnyis pa*, *The Complete Works*, vol. 15. Thimphu, Bhutan: Kunzang Tobgey.
- dPal man dKon mchog rGyal tshan. (ed.). 1974. *bDen gtam snying rje'i rol mtsho las zur du phyung ba sa rnying bka' brgyud sogs kyi khyad par mgo smos tsam mu to'i rgyangs 'bod kyi tshul du bya gtong snyan sgron bdud rtsi'i bsang gtor*, *The Collected Works of dBal man dkong mchog rgyal mtshan* vol. 6. Delhi: Gyaltan Gelek Namgyal.
- . (ed.). 1974. *Gyi na ba zhig gi gzu bo'i bo'i sprin rum las 'orng ba'i bden gtam bdud rtsir 'khyil ba'i snying rje'i rol mtsho*, *The Collected Works of dBal man dkong mchog rgyal mtshan* vol. 6. Delhi: Gyaltan Gelek Namgyal.
- dGe 'dun Chos 'phel . (ed.). 1990. *dBu ma'i zab gnad snying por dril ba'i legs bshad klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*. Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yid dbe rnying Khang.
- dGe shes Yeshe Thabs mkhas. (ed.). 1997. *Shar Tsongkhapa's drang ba dand nges pa'i don rnam par 'byed pa'i bstan bcos legs bshad snying po*. Sarnath: CIHTS.

- Gorampa bSod nams Senge. (ed.). 1969. *bDu ma spyi don nges don rab gsal, The Complete Works of the Sakya Scholars*, vol. 12. Tokyo: Toyo Bunko.
- . (ed.). 1969. *lTa ba ngen sel, The complete Works of the Sakya Scholars*, vol. 13. Tokyo: Toyo Bunk.
- . (ed.). 1969. *Phung khams skye mched kyi rnam gzhag ji snyad shes bya'i sgo 'byed, The complete works of Goram bSod nams Senge*. vol. 12. Tokyo: The Tokyo Bunko.
- . (ed.). 1969. *rTen 'brel gyi rnam par bzahag pa 'khor 'das rab gsal, The complete works of Goram bSod nams Senge*. vol. 14. Tokyo: The Tokyo Bunko.
- . (ed.). 1969. *Yang dag lta ba'i 'od zer, The Complete Works of the Sakya Scholars*, vol. 12. Tokyo: Toyo Bunko.
- . (ed.). 1994. *lTa ba'i shen 'byed theg mchog gnad gyi zla zer*. Sarnath: Sakya Student's Union.
- rGyel tshab rJe (rGyal tshab Dar ma Rin chen). (ed.). 1980. *rTsa ba shes rab kyi dka' gnad chen po brgyad kyi bshad pa*. New Delhi. Lama Guru Deva.
- . (ed.). 1985. *bDen gnyis kyi rnam gzhag dang lta ba'i 'khrid yid rin po che'i 'phrin ba*. In the *dbu ma'i lta khrid phyogs bsdebs*. Sarnath: Gelukpa Student's Welfare Committee.
- 'Jam dbyangs bZhad ba'i rDo rje. (ed.). 1992. *Grub miha'i rnam bshad kun bsang zhing gi nyima*. Tsho ngon: Kan su'i Mi Rigs Press.
- lCang skya Rol pa'i rDo rje. (ed.). 1989. *Gub mtha' thub stan lhun po'i mdzes rgyan: Tsho sngon: mTsho sngon Mi Rigs Par Khang*.
- mKhas grub rJe (mKhas grub dGe legs dpal bZang). (ed.). n.d. *dBu ma'i stong thun skal bzang mig 'byed*. Dharamasala: Sherig Press.

- mKhan zur bsTan pa bsTan 'dzin . (ed.). 1983. *LTa ba'i mnyams mgyur thun mongs ma yin pa a ma ngo shes kyi bsdus don gnad kyi drung thig and de'i rnam bshad grub bzhi'i snying nor*. Mundgod: Drepung Loseling Printing Press.
- mKhen po Kun bzang dPal dan. (ed.). 1993. *Byang chub sems pa'i dpyod pa la 'jug pa'i tshig 'grel 'jam dbyangs bla ma'i zhal lung bdud tsi'i thig pa*. Sarnath: Nyingmapa Students' Welfare Committee.
- mKhen zur Pad ma rGyal tshan. (ed.). 1984. *Zab don gdams pa'i mig 'byed gser gyi thur ma*, vol. 3. Mundgod: Drepung Loselling Printing Press.
- Khroru Tse nams. (ed.). 1989. *dPal mnyam med mar pa dka' brgyud kyi grub pa'i mtha' rnam par nges par byed pa mdor bsdus su brjod pa d'ags brgyud grub pa'i mi long*, Gang can rig 'gya'i sgo 'byed lde mig vol. XIII. Peking: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.
- . (ed.). 1989. *Gang ljongs rgyal bstan yongs rtogs kyi phyi mo snga 'gyur rnying ma'i lugs kyi lta sgom spyod gsum gyi rnam gzhag mdo tsam brjod pa tshes pa'i lda ba*, Gang can rig 'gya'i sgo 'byed lde mig vol. XII. Peking: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.
- kLongchen rab 'Byams. (ed.). 1983. *Grub mtha' rin chen mrdzod*, vol. 6. Gangtok, Sikkim: Khentse Labrang.
- Kun mkhyen Pad ma dKar po. (ed.). n.d. *dBu ma'i gzhung gsum gsal byed*. Sarnath: Kargyud Students' Welfare Committee.
- sMa ja Byang chub rTson grus. (ed.). 1974. *dBu ma rtsa ba shes rab kyi 'grel ba 'thad pa'i rgyan*. Delhi: XVI Karmapa.
- Mi skyod rDo rje. (ed.). n.d. *dBu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad dpal ldan lus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhal lung dag rgyud grub pa'i shing rta*. Block Print.

- 'Ju Mipham 'Jam dbyangs rNam rgyal rGya mtsho. (ed.). 1976. *Don rnam par nges pa shes rab ral gri, The Collected Writings*, vol. 3. Gangtok: Sonam Topgyal Kazi.
- . (ed.). 1976. *Nges shes rin po che' sgron me, The Collected Writings*, vol. 8. Gangtok: Sonam Topgyal Kazi.
- . (ed.). 1977. *dBud ma 'jug pa'i 'grel pa zla ba'i zhal lung dri med shel phreng*. Sarnath: Nyingma Students ' Welfare Committee.
- . (ed.). 1979. *dBu ma rtsa ba'i mchan 'grel gnas lugs rab gsal, The Collected Works*, vol. 1. Gangtok: Sonam Topgyal Kazi.
- . (ed.). 1993. *brGal lan nyin byed snang ba*. Sarnath: Nyingmapa Students' Welfare Committee.
- . (ed.). 1993. *Dam chos dogs sel*. Sarnath: Nyingmapa Students' Welfare Committee.
- . (ed.). 1993. *gZhan gyis brtsad pa'i lan mdor bsdus pa rigs lam rab gsal de nyid snang byed*. Sarnath: Nyingmapa Students' Welfare Committee.
- . (ed.). 1993. *Sher 'grel ke ta ka*. Sarnath: Nyingmapa Students' Welfare Committee.
- Namdol, Ācārya G. (ed. and trans.). 1991. *Ācārya Nāgārjuna's Bodhicittavivarāṇa and Ācārya kamalaśīla's Bodhicitabhāvanā*, Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetan Series–23. Sarnath: CIHTS.
- . (ed. and trans.). 1991. *Ācārya Nāgārjuna's Bodhicittavivarāṇa and Ācārya kamalaśīla's Bodhicitabhāvanā*, Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetan Series–23. Sarnath: CIHTS.
- . (restored, ed. and trans.). 1997. *Bhāvanākramah of Ācārya Kamalaśīla*, Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica series 9. Sarnath: CIHTS.

- Namdol, Ācārya G. and Samten, Geshe Ngawang. (ed. and trans.). 1994. *rJe Tsongkhapa chen pos mdzad pa'i rten 'brel stod pa legs bshad snying po*. Sarnath: CIHTS.
- Red mda ba gZhon nu bLo gros and Padma, bsTan 'dzin. (ed. and trans.). 1996. *bShes pa'i spring yin yig gi 'grel pa don gsal*. Sarnath: CIHTS.
- Red mda ba gZhon nu bLo gros. (ed.). 1987. *bDu ma bzhi brgya ba'i 'grel pa*. Sarnath: Sakya Students' Union.
- . (ed.). 1995. *bDu ma 'jug pa'i rnam bshad de kno na nyid gsal ba'i sgron ma*. Sarnath: Sakyapa Students' Union.
- Rong ston Śākya rgyal tshan. (ed.). 1995. *dBu ma tsa ba'i rnam bshad zab mo'i di kho na nyid snang ba*. Sarnath: Sakya Students' Union.
- . (ed.). n.d. *dBu ma rigs pa'i tsogs kyi dka' ba'i gnad stan pa rigs lam kun gsal*. Block Print.
- . (ed.). n.d. *dBu ma'i lta khrid kyi bsodus don snying po'e gsal byed*. Block print.
- . (ed.). n.d. *Shes rab snying po'i rnam bshad yum don rab gsal*. Block Print.
- Sa skya puṇḍita Kun dga' rGyal tsan (also know as Sa pañ). (ed.). 1968. *gShung lugs legs par bshad pa, the Sakya bka' 'bum*, vol. 5. Tokyo: Toyo Bunkyo.
- . (ed.). 1968. *Thub pa'i dgongs pa rab tu gsal ba, the Sakya 'bka' 'bum*, vol. 5. Tokyo: Toyo Bunkyo.
- . (ed.). n.d. *sDom gsum rab tu dbye ba'i stan bcos*. Jayyed Press, Delhi: Sherig Parkhang, Sonam Tsering.
- Se Tsang bLozang dPal ldan. (ed.). 1988. *dPal mnyam med ri bo dge ldan pa'i grub mtha' rnam gzhaq mdo tsam brjod pa 'jam mgon bstan pa'i mdzes*

rgyan, Gangs can rig 'brgya'i sgo 'byed lde mig vol. X. Peking: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Sera rJe tsun Chos kyi rGyal tshan. (ed.). 1969. *Zab mo stong pa nyid kyi lta ba la log rtog 'gog par byed pa'i bstan bcos lta ba ngan pa'i mun sel zhes bya ba bshes gnyen chen po Śākya mchogden pa la gdams pa*. New Delhi: Tibet House.

sTag tsang Lotsā ba . (ed.). n.d. *Grub mtha' kun shes nas mtha' bral sgrub pa zhes bya ba'i stan cos rnam par bshad pa legs bshad rgya mtsho*. Block Print.

———. n.d. *Grub mtha' kun shes nas mtha' bral sgrub pa zhes bya ba'i bstan cos*. Block Print.

Thub stan Chos grags. (ed.). 1990. *Spyod 'jug gi 'grel bshad rgyal sras yon tan bum bzang*. Tsho sngon: Mi rig Parkhang.

The'u bKwan bLo bzang Chos kyi Nyima. (ed.). 1985. *Thu'u bk'an grub mtha*. Kan Su: Kansu'i mi rig dpe skrun khang.

Tsongkhapa bLo bzang Grags pa. (ed.). 1970. *rTsa ba shes rab kyi dka' gnas chen po brgyad kyi bshad pa*. Sarnath: Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Press.

———. (ed.). 1985. *Lam gtso rnam gsum gyi rtsa ba*. In the *dbu ma'i lta khrid phyogs bsdebs*. Sarnath: Gelukpa Students' Welfare Committee.

———. (ed.). 1994. *rTen 'brel stod pa legs bshad snying po*. In Ācārya Gyaltsen Namdol and Ācārya Ngawang Samten (trans. and ed.). *Pratityasamutpādaśūtrabhāṣitahṛdayam of Ācārya Tsongkhapa*. Dalai Lama's Tibeto-Indological Series, vol. 3. Sarnath: CHITS.

———. (ed.). 1997. *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*. In Geshey Yeshe Thabs Geshe Yeshey Thabkha's *Shar rTsongkhapa blo bZang drags pas mdzad pa'r drang ba dang nges pa'i don rnam par byed pa'i bstan bcos legs bshad snying po*. Sarnath: CIHTS.

———. (ed.). 1984. *bDu ma dgongs pa rab gsal*. Sarnath: Gelukpa Students' Welfare Committee.

- . (ed.). 1992. *rTsa shes tik chen rigs pa'i mgrya mtso*. Sarnath: Gelukpa Students' Welfare Committee.
- . (ed.). 1993. *Byang chub lam gyi rim pa chen mo*. Sarnath: Gelukpa Students' Welfare Committee.
- . (ed.). 1995. *Lam gtso rnam gsum*. In the *Zhal 'don phyogs bsdebs*. Sarnath: Gelukpa Students' Welfare Committee.
- Yon bstan bZang po. (ed.). 1990. *rGyu 'bras theg pa mchog gi gnas lugs zab mo'i don rnam par nges pa rje jo nang pa'i chen po'i ring lugs 'jigs med gdongs lnga'i nga ro*, Gang can rig 'gya'i sgo 'byed lde mig vol. XV. Peking: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Other Tibetan titles

- rTsa ba phyogs bsdu*. (ed.). 1996. Sarnath: Sakya Students' Union.
- Legs par bshad pa bka' gdams rin po che'i gsungs gi gces btus nor bu'i bang mdzod*. (ed.). 1995. Ziling: mtsho sngon mi rigs Parkhang.
- bStan pa'i mng' bdag dpal lda saskya pa'i lta grub theg pa'i rnam dbye kun dga'i bstan pa mdzes pa'i rgyan yid bzhin dbang gi rgyal po'i do shal*, Gang can rig 'gya'i sgo 'byed lde mig vol. XIV. (ed.). 1989. Peking: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.
- Legs par bshad pa bka' gdams rin po che'i gsung gi gces btus nor bu'i bang mdzod*. (ed.). 1995. mTsho ngon mi rigs pde skrun khang.

English Sources

- Cabezón, J. I. 1992 *A Dose of Emptiness: An Annotated Translation of the sTong thun chen mo of mKhas grub dGe legs dpal bzang*. Anbany: State University of New York.

- Cozort, D. 1998. *Unique Tenets of the Middle Way Consequent School*. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications.
- Crosby, K and Skilton, A. 1995. *Śāntideva: The Bodhicāryāṭāra*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- De Bary, W, M. Theodore. 1958. *Sources of Indian Tradition* vol. 1. New York: Colombia University Press.
- Dreyfu, B. J. Georges. 1997. *Recognizing Reality: Dharmakīrti's Philosophy and its Tibetan interpretations*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Garfield, J. L. 1995. *The Fundamental Wisdom of The Middle Way: Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 2001. *Empty words: Buddhist Philosophy and Cross-Cultural Interpretation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Geshe Sonam Rinchen (comm.) and Ruth Sonam (ed. and trans). 1994. *The Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas: Gyel-tsap on Āryadeva's Four Hundred*. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications.
- Harvey, P. 2000. *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, history and practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2000. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hopkins, J. 1996. *Meditation on Emptiness*. Boston, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications.
- . 1995. *Emptiness Yoga: The Tibetan Middle Way*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Hungtington, C. W., Jr. 1994. *The Emptiness of Emptiness: An Introduction to Early Indian Mādhyamika*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Kalupahana, D. J. 1991. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

- Keown, Damien. 2000. *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics*. Richmond, Surrey: Curson Press.
- . 2001. *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*. New York: Palgrave Publishers Ltd.
- King, W. L. 1964. *In Hope of Nibbāna*. La Salle: Open Court.
- Klein, A. 1991. *Knowing, Naming and Negation: A sourcebook on Tibetan Sautrāntika*. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications
- Lindtner, Chr. 1982. *Nagarjuniana: studies in the Writings and Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*, vol. II. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- . 1986. *Master of Wisdom: Writings of the Buddhist Master Nāgājuna*. Oakland, CA: Dharma Press.
- . 1987. *Nāgārjuniana: Studies in the Writings and Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Lodrö, Geshe Gendü and Hokin, J. (ed. and trans.). 1992. *Walking Through Walls: a presentation of Tibetan Meditation*. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications.
- Lopez, D. 1996. *Elaborations on Emptiness: Uses of the Heart Sūtra*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Murti, T. R. V. 1955. *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- . 1985. Preface to *Mādhyamika Dialectic and the Philosophy of Nāgārjuna* (ed.) by S. Rinpoche. Sarnath: CITHS.
- Narain, Harsha. 1985. "The nature of Mādhyamika thought." In the *Mādhyamika Dialectic and the Philosophy of Nāgārjuna* (ed.) by Prof. S. Rinpoche. Sarnath: CIHTS.
- Newland, Guy. 1992. *The Two truths*. New York: Snow Lion Publications
- Pabongka, R., Trijang, R. (ed.). and Richards, M. (trans.). 1991. *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand: A concise Discourse on the Path To Enlightenment*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

- Poussin, La Vallée. 1985. 'Madhyamaka.' In the *Mādhyamika Dialectic and the Philosophy of Nāgārjuna* (ed.) by Prof. Samdhong, Rinpoche. Sarnath: CIHTS.
- Powers, John. 1995. *An Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications.
- . 1995. (trans.). *Wisdom of Buddha: the Samdhinirmocana Sutra*. Berkeley, CA: Dharma Publishing.
- Ramanan, K. V. 1987. *Nāgārjuna's Philosophy as Presented in the Mahā-Prajñāpāramitā-Śāstra*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- S. Rinpoche. 1985 (ed.). *Mādhyamika Dialectic and The Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*. Sarnath: CIHTS.
- Sharma, P. 1997. *Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra: original Sanskrit text with English translation*. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan.
- Singh, Jaideva. 1989. Preface to Theodore Stcherbatsky's *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass.
- Sogyal Rinpoche. 1992. *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. Sydney: Random House Australia.
- Spiro, M. E. 1982. *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sprung, M. 1979. *Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way: The Essential Chapters from the Prasannapadā of Candrakīrti*, Boulder, Colorado: Prajñā Press.
- Stcherbatsky, T. 1998. *The conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass.
- Upadhyaya, K. N. 1987. 'God, the self and the Buddha's Silence.' In H. Samatani, (ed.). *Śramaṇa Vidyā*. Sarnath: CIHTS.
- Williams, P. 1998. *Altruism and Reality: Studies in the Philosophy of the Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Richmond: Curzon Press.

- . 1998. *The Reflexive Nature of Awareness: A Tibetan Madhyamaka Defence*. Richmond: Curzon Press.

Pāli sources

- Bhikkhu Bodhi and Bhikkhu Ñāṇamol. (trans.). 1995. *The Middle length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*. Boston: Wisdom Publication.
- . (ed. & revised) and Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu (trans.) 1994. *The Discourse on Right View: The Sammāditṭhi Sutta and its Commentary*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- . (trans.). 2000. *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃutta Nikāya*. Vol. I & II. Boston: Wisdom Publication.
- . 1980. *Transcendental Dependent Arising: A Translation and Exposition of the Upanisa Sutta*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- . 1988. 'A Look At the Kālāma Sutta.' Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- . 1990. *Nourishing The Roots: Essays on Buddhist Ethics*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- . 1993. 'A Buddhist Response to Contemporary Dilemmas of Human Existence.' Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- . 1994. 'From Views to Vision. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- . 1994. *The Noble Eightfold Path: The Way to the End of Suffering*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.

- . 1995. 'Dhamma and Non-duality.' Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- . 1995. 'Towards a Threshold of Understanding.' Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- Ācharya Buddharakkhita. (trans.). 1995. *The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- Ācharya Buddharakkhita. 1995. *Metta: The Philosophy and Practice of Universal Love*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- Glasenapp, H. V. 1995. *Vedanta and Buddhism: A Comparative Study*. Sri Lanka: The Buddhist Publication of Society.
- Horner, I. B. (trans). 1996. *Milinda's Question* vol. I. Sacred Books of The Buddhists Vol. XXII. Oxford: The Pali Text Society.
- . (trans). 1999. *Milinda's Question* vol. II. Sacred Books of The Buddhists Vol. XXIII. Oxford: The Pali Text Society.
- Jones, J. J. (trans.). 1987. *The Mahāvastu* vol.I. Sacred Books of The Buddhists Vol. XVI. London: The Pali Text Society.
- . (trans.). 1876. *The Mahāvastu* vol.II. Sacred Books of The Buddhists Vol. XVIII. London: The Pali Text Society.
- . (trans.). 1978. *The Mahāvastu* vol.III. Sacred Books of The Buddhists Vol. XIX. London: The Pali Text Society.
- Mahāsi Sayadaw and Nyanaponika Thera (trans.). 1994. *The Progress of Insight (Visuddhiñāna-katha): A Modern Treatise on Buddhist Satipaṭṭhāna Meditation*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication of Society.
- Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli. (trans.). 2001. *The Path of Purification: A translation of Visuddhimagga by Bhaddanācariya Buddhaghosa*. Taipei, Taiwan: The Corporate body of the Buddha Educational Foundation.

- . 1995. *Three Cardinal Discourses of the Buddha*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- and Bhikkhu Bodhi. (trans.). 1995. *The Middle length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*. Boston: Wisdom Publication.
- Narada Mahāthera (Adapted & trans.). 1995. *Everyman's Ethics: Four Discourses of the Buddha*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication
- .1995. *Buddhism in a Nutshell*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- Narasu, P. Lakshami. 1993. *The Essence of Buddhism*. Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation.
- Nyanaponika Thera (trans). 1994. *The Progress of Insight (Visuddhiñāna-katha): A Modern Treatise on Buddhist Satipaṭṭhāna Meditation*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication of Society.
- Nyanaponika Thera and Hecker, Hellmut. 1997. *Great Disciples of the Buddha: Their lives, their works, their legacy*. Boston: Wisdom Publication.
- Rahula, Walpola. 1974. *What The Buddha Taught*. New York: Grove Press.
- S. Rinpoche. (ed.). 1987. *Ten Suttas from Digha Nikāya: Long discourses of the Buddha*. Sarnath: CIHTS.
- Sister Khema. Ayya. 1994. 'Meditation on No-Self.' Kandy, Srilanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- Thanissaro Bhikkhu. (trans. & expl.). 1996. *The Wings to Awakening. An Anthology from the Pali Canon*. Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation.
- .2001. *Itivuttaka: This Was Said by the Buddha*. Barre, MA: Dhamma Dana Publications.
- .2001. 'Questions of Skill.'
- <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/modern/thanissaro/questions.html>

- . 2001. *The Mind Like Fire Unbound: An image in the Early buddhist Discourses*. MA, USA: Dhamma Dana Publication.
- . (trans.). 2002. *An Anthology of Selected suttas from the Majjhima Nikāya*.
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/majjhima/index/html>
- . (trans.). 2002. *An Anthology of Selected suttas from the Samyutta Nikāya*.
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/samyutta/index.html>
- . (trans.). 2002. *An Anthology of Selected suttas from the Digha Nikāya*.
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/digha/index/html>
- . (trans.). 2002. *An Anthology of Selected suttas from the Aṅguttara Nikāya*.
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/anguttara/index.html>
- . (trans.). 2002. *An Anthology of Selected suttas from the Khuddaka Nikāya*.
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/khuddaka/index.html>
- . 2002. 'Nibbāna.'
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/modern/thanissaro/nibban.html>
- U Na. 1987. *Three Fundamental Concepts*. In the *Ten Suttas from Digha Nikāya* (ed.). S Rinpoche. Sarnath: CIHTS.
- Walshe, Maurice. (trans.). 1995. *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A translation of the Digha Nikāya*. Boston: Wisdom Publication.

Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

- Ted Honderich. (ed.). 1995. *The Oxford Companion To Philosophy*. Oxford New York: Oxford University Press.
- Candra, Sarat, Das. (ed.). 1991. *Tibetan-English Dictionary: with Sanskrit Synonyms*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

- Carr, Brian and Mahalingam, Indra. (ed.). 2001. *Companion Encyclopedia of Asian Philosophy*. New York: Routledge.
- Tang Yi Sun. (ed.). 1993. *The Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary (bod rgya tshig mrdzod chen mo)*. Peking: Mirigs parkhang.
- Tsepak Rigzin. (ed.). 1986. *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.